# ETHICS

AND THE

# MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY.

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By KARL KAUTSKY.

(Translated by J. B. Askew.)

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**ONE SHILLING.**

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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

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KARL KAUTSKY

(Author of "The Social Revolution and on the Morrow of the Social Revolution," &c.).

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# PREFACE.

LIKE so many other of the principal Marxist publications, the present one owes its origin to a special occasion—it arose out of a controversy. The polemic in which I was involved last autumn with the editors of "Vorwaerts," brought me to touch on the question of their ethical tendencies. What I said, however, on this point was so often misunderstood by one side, and on the other brought me so many requests to give a more thorough and systematic exposition of my ideas on Ethics, that I felt constrained to attempt to give at least a short sketch of the development of Ethics on the basis of the Materialist Conception of History. I take as my starting point, consequently, that materialist philosophy which was founded on one side by Marx and Engels, on the other, in the same spirit, by Joseph Dietzgen. For the results at which I have arrived, I alone am responsible.

My original intention was to write an article for the "Neue Zeit" on the subject. But never had I so miscalculated the plan of a work as this; and not only in respect of its scope. I had begun the work in

October, because I thought there were going to be a few months of quiet for the party, which might be devoted to theoretical work. The Jena Congress had run harmoniously, so that I did not expect to see a conflict in our party so soon. On the other hand, it looked at the beginning of October as if there had come in the Russian Revolution a pause for gathering together and organising the revolutionary forces.

As is well known, however, everything turned out quite differently. An unimportant personal question was the occasion of a sharp discussion, which, indeed, did not for a moment disturb the party, but all the same cost the party officials, and especially those in Berlin, a considerable amount of time, worry and energy. What, however, certainly demanded even more time and energy was the Russian Revolution, which unexpectedly, in the course of that very October, received a powerful impetus, and regained its previous height. That glorious movement naturally absorbed, even outside of Russia, all the interest of thinking people. It was a magnificent time, but it was not a time to write a book on Ethics. However, the subject had captivated me, and I could not free myself, and so I concluded my work, despite the many distractions and interruptions which the Berlin storm in a tea cup and the hurricane on the Russian ocean brought with them. It is to be hoped that this little work does not bear too obviously on its face the marks of its stormy birth. When, however, I had brought it to a conclusion, another question arose. Far beyond the limits of an article had it grown, and yet was hardly fitted for a

book. It contents itself with giving a general idea of my thought, and gives very few references to facts and arguments to prove or illustrate what has been brought forward.

I asked myself whether I ought not to reconstruct and enlarge my work by the addition of such arguments and facts. If, however, that had to be done, it would mean delaying the publication of the work for an indefinite period; because to carry out this work I should require two years quiet, undisturbed labour. We are, however, coming to a time when for every Social-Democrat quiet and undisturbed work will be impossible—when our work will be continual fighting. Neither did I desire that the publication should be put off for too long a time, in view of the influence which has been gained in our ranks by the Ethics of Kant, and I, consequently, hold it necessary to show the relations which exist between the Materialist Conception of History and Ethics.

Consequently, I have resolved to allow the little book to appear. In order, however, to show that with this not all is said which I might have said on Ethics, and that I hold myself in reserve to deal with the subject more fully in a period of greater calm, I call the present work simply an attempt—an essay. Certainly, when these quieter times will come is not discernible at present, as I have already remarked. At this very time the myrmidons of the Czar are zealously at work to rival the deeds of the Albas and Tillys during the religious wars of the 16th and 17th centuries—not in

military achievements, but in brutal destruction. The West European champions of culture and order regard that with enthusiasm as the restoration of legal conditions. But just as little as the hirelings of the Hapsburgs succeeded, despite temporary successes in conquering North Germany and Holland for Catholicism, will the Cossacks of the Romanoffs succeed in restoring the rule of Absolutism. This has only sufficient strength remaining to lay its country waste, not to rule it.

In any case the Russian Revolution is not by any means at an end—it cannot close so long as the peasants are not appeased. The longer it lasts so much the greater will be the disturbance in the ranks of the West European proletariat, so much the nearer financial catastrophes, so much the more probable that, even in West Europe, there should set in a period of class struggle.

This is not a time which calls for the theoretical labours of revolutionary writers. But this drawback for our theoretical labours, which will be probably felt in the next few years, we need not lament. The Materialist Conception of History is not only important because it allows us to explain history better than has been done up to now, but also because it enables us to make history better than has been hitherto done. And the latter is more important than the former. From the progress of the practice our theoretical knowledge grows, and in the progress of the practice our theoretical knowledge is proved. No world conception has

been in so high a degree a philosophy of deeds as the dialectical materialism. Not only upon research but upon deeds do we rely to show the superiority of our philosophy.

Even the book before us has not to serve for contemplative knowledge, but for the fight—a fight in which we have to develop the highest ethical strength as well as the greatest clearness of knowledge if we are to win.

K. KAUTSKY.

Berlin, Friednau, January, 1906.

# Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History.

## CHAPTER I.

### Ancient and Christian Ethics.

In the history of philosophy the question of Ethics comes to the fore soon after the Persian War. The fact of having successfully repelled the great Persian despotism had had a similar effect on the tiny Hellenic people to that made by the defeat of the Russian despotism on the Japanese. At one blow they became a world power, in command of the sea which surrounded them, and with that its trade. And if now in Japan an era of great industry is being inaugurated on a scale the extent of which they themselves are hardly yet fully aware, so after the Persian Wars Greece, and Athens in particular, became the headquarters of the world commerce of that time, commercial capitalism embraced the entire people, and dissolved all the traditional relations and conceptions which had hitherto ruled the individual and regulated his dealings. The individual found himself suddenly transplanted into a new society, in which he missed all the traditional supports on which he had relied; and, indeed, the more so the higher he stood socially; thus he found himself left wholly to himself. And yet, despite all this seeming Anarchy, everyone

felt not only a need for distinct rules of conduct, but he found more or less clearly that in his own inner being there worked a force which controlled his action and allowed him to decide between good and bad, to aim for the good and avoid the bad. This force revealed itself as a highly mysterious power. Granted that it controlled the actions of many men, that its decisions between good and bad were given without the least delay and asserted themselves with all decision, if anyone asked what was the actual nature of this force, and on what foundation it built its judgments, it was then seen that both this force as well as the judgments, which appeared so natural and self-evident, were phenomena which were harder to understand than any other phenomena in the world.

So we see then that since the Persian Wars, Ethics, or the investigation of the mysterious regulator of human action—the moral law—comes to the front in Greek philosophy. Up to this time Greek philosophy had been more or less natural philosophy. It made it its duty to investigate and explain the laws which hold in the world of nature. Now nature lost interest with the philosophers even more and more. Man, or the ethical nature of humanity, became the central point of their investigations. Natural philosophy ceased to make further progress, the natural sciences were divided from philosophy; all progress of the ancient philosophy came now from the study of the spiritual nature of man and his morality.

The Sophists had already begun to despise the knowledge of nature. Socrates went still further, being of opinion that he could learn nothing from the trees, but much from the human beings in the town. Plato looked on natural philosophy as play. With that, however, the method of philosophy changed. Natural philosophy is necessarily bound to rely on the observation of nature. On the other hand, how is the moral nature of man to be observed with more certainty than through the observation of our own personality? The senses can deceive us; other men can deceive us; but we ourselves do not lie to ourselves

when we wish to be truthful. Thus, finally, that alone was recognised as certain knowledge which man produced from himself.

But not alone the subject and the method but also the object of philosophy was different. Natural philosophy aimed at the examination of the necessary connection of cause and effect. Its point of view was that of causality. Ethics, on the other hand, dealt with the will and duty of man, with ends and aims which he strives for. Thus its point of view is that of a conscious aim or teleology.

Now these two conceptions do not always reveal themselves with equal sharpness in all the various schools of thought.

There are two methods of explaining the moral law within us.

We can search for its roots in the obvious forces of human action, and, as a result, appeared the pursuit of happiness or pleasure. With commodity production, when goods are produced by private producers independently of each other, happiness and pleasure, and the conditions necessary thereto, become a private matter. Consequently, men came to look for the foundation of the moral law in the individual need for happiness or pleasure. That is good which makes for the individual pleasure and increases his happiness, and evil is that which produces the contrary. How is it then possible that not everybody under all circumstances has a desire for the good? That is explained by the fact that there are various kinds of pleasure and happiness. Evil arises when we choose a lower kind of pleasure, or happiness in preference to a higher, or sacrifice a lasting pleasure to a momentary and fleeting one. Thus it arises from ignorance or short sightedness. Accordingly, Epicurus looked on the intellectual pleasures as higher than the physical because they last longer and give unalloyed satisfaction. He considers the pleasure of repose greater than the pleasure of action. Spiritual peace seems to him the greatest pleasure. In consequence all excess in any pleasure is to be rejected; and even selfish action is bad, since

respect, love, and the help of my neighbour, as well as the prosperity of the community to which I belong, are factors which are necessary to my own prosperity, which, however, I cannot attain if I only look out for myself without any scruples.

This view of Ethics had the advantage that it appeared quite natural and that it was very easy to reconcile it with the needs of those who were content to regard the knowledge which our senses give us of the knowable world as real, and to whom human existence itself formed only a part of this world. On the other hand, this view of Ethics was bound to produce in its turn that materialist view of the world. A theory which founded Ethics on the longing for pleasure or happiness of the individual, or on egoism, and the materialist world-concept conditioned and lent each other mutual support. The connection of both elements comes most completely to expression in Epicurus (341-270 B.C.). His materialist philosophy of nature is founded with a distinctly ethical aim. The materialist view of nature is in his view alone in the position to free us from the fears which a foolish superstition awakens in us, and to give us that peace of soul without which true happiness is impossible.

On the other hand, all those elements who were opposed to this philosophy were obliged to reject this ethics and vice versa: those who were not satisfied with his ethics were not satisfied with the materialism either. And the Ethic of Egoism, or the pursuit of individual happiness, gave ample opportunity for attack. In the first place it did not explain how the moral law arose as a binding moral force, as the duty to do the right, and not simply as advice to prefer the more rational kind of pleasure to the less rational. And the speedy, decisive moral judgments on good and bad are quite different from the balancing up between different kinds of pleasures or utilities. Finally also, it is possible to feel a moral sense of duty even in cases where the most generous interpretation can find no pleasure or ability from which the pursuit of this duty can be deduced. If I refuse to lie, although

I by that means stir up public opinion for ever against me, if I put my existence at stake or even bring on myself the penalty of death, there can be no talk of even the more remote pleasure or happiness which could transform the discomfort or pain of the moment into its opposite.

But what could the critics bring forward to explain this phenomenon? In reality, nothing—even, if according to their own view, a great deal. Since they were unable to explain the moral law by natural means it became to them the surest and most unanswerable proof that man lived not only a natural life, but also outside of nature, that in him supernatural and extra-natural forces work, that his spirit is something super-natural. Thus arose from this view the Ethic of Philosophic Idealism and Monotheism, the new belief in God.

This belief in God was quite different to the old Polytheism ; it differed from the latter not only in the number of the gods, and it did not arise from the fact that many were reduced to one. Polytheism was an attempt to explain the processes of nature. Its gods were personifications of the forces of nature; they were thus not over nature, and not outside of nature, but in her, and formed a part of her. Natural philosophy superseded them in the degree in which it discovered other than personal causation in the processes of nature, and developed the idea of the necessary connection of cause and effect. The gods might here and there maintain a traditional existence for a time even in the philosophy, but only as a kind of superman who no longer played any active part. Even for Epicurus, despite his materialism, the gods were not dead but they were changed into passive spectators.

Even the non-materialist ethical school of philosophy, such as was most completely represented by Plato (427-347 B.C.), and whose mystical side was far more clearly developed by the Neo-Platonists, especially by Plotinus (204-270 A.D.), even this school did not find the gods necessary to explain nature, and they dealt with the latter no differently to the materialists. Their

idea of God did not spring out of the need to explain the natural world around us but the ethical and spiritual nature of man. For that they required to assume a spiritual being standing outside of and over nature, thus outside of time and space, a spiritual being which formed the quintessence of all morality, and who ruled the material nature just as the aristocrats ruled the crowd who worked with their hands. And just as the former conceived themselves as noble and the latter appeared to them common and vulgar, so did nature become mean and bad, the spirit, on the other hand, elevated and good. Man was unlucky enough to belong to both worlds: those of matter and spirit. Thus he is half animal and half angel, and oscillates between good and evil. But just as God rules nature, has the moral in man the force to overcome the natural, the desires of the flesh, and to triumph over them. Complete happiness is, nevertheless, impossible for man so long as he dwells in this vale of tears, where he is condemned to bear the burden of his flesh. Only then, when he is free from this and his spirit has returned to its original source, to God, can he enjoy unlimited happiness.

Thus it will be seen that God plays a very different rôle to what He does in the original Polytheism. This one god is no personification of an appearance of the outer nature, but the assumption for itself of an independent existence on the part of the spiritual (or intellectual) nature of man. Just as this is a unity, so can the Godhead be no multiplicity. And its most complete philosophic form, the one god, has no other function than of accounting for the moral law. To interfere in the course of this world in the manner of the ancient gods is not his business, but, at least, for philosophers the assumption of binding force in the natural law of cause and effect suffices.

Certainly the more this view became popular and grew into the religion of the people, the more did the highest, the all-embracing and all-ruling spirit take on again personal characteristics; the more did he take part in human affairs, and the more did the old gods

smuggle themselves in. They came in as intermediators between God and man, as saints and angels. But even in this form the contempt for nature held good, as well as the view that the spiritual, and especially the ethical nature of man, was of supernatural origin and afforded an infallible proof of the existence of a supernatural world.

Between the two extremes, Plato and Epicurus, there were many intermediary positions possible. Among these the most important was the Stoic philosophy, founded by Zeno (341-270 B.C). Just like the Platonic philosophy, it attached those who sought to derive the moral law from the pleasure or egoism of the individual; it recognised in him a higher power standing over the individual which can drive man to action, and which brings him pain and grief, nay, even to death. But different to Plato, it saw in the moral law nothing supernatural, only a product of nature. Virtue arises from the knowledge of nature; happiness is arrived at when man acts in accordance with nature, that is, in accordance with the universe, or universal reason. To know nature and act in accordance with her reasonably, which is the same as virtuously, and voluntarily to submit to her necessity, disregarding individual pleasure and pain, that is the way to happiness which we will go. The study of nature is, however, only a means to the study of virtue. And nature itself is explained from a moral point of view. The practical result of the Stoic Ethics is not the pursuit of happiness but the contempt for pleasure and the good things of the world. But this contempt for the world was finally to serve the same end: that which appeared to Zeno as well as Epicurus as the highest, viz., a state of repose for the individual soul. Both systems of philosophy arose out of the need for rest.

The intermediary position of the Stoic Ethics between the Platonic and the Epicurean corresponded to the view of the universe which Stoicism drew up. The explanation of nature is by no means without importance to them, but nature appeared to them as a greater view of monotheistic materialism, which assumes a

divine original force from which even the human soul springs. But this original force, the original fire, is bodily, it exists within and not without nature, and the soul is not immortal, even if it survives the human body. Finally it will be consumed by the original fire.

Stoicism and Platonism finally became elements of Christianity, and overcame in this form the materialist Epicureanism. This latter materialism could only prove satisfactory to a social class which was satisfied with things as they were, which found in them its pleasure and happiness, and had no need for another state of affairs.

It was necessarily rejected by those classes to whom the world as it was seemed bad and full of pain; to the decaying class of old aristocracy as well as the exploited classes for whom present and future in this world could only be equally hopeless, when the material world, that is, the world of experience, was the only one, and no reliance was to be placed on an almighty spirit who had it in his power to bring this world to destruction. Finally, materialism was bound to be rejected by the whole society so soon as this had so far degenerated that even the ruling classes suffered under the state of affairs, when even these came to the opinion that no good could come out of the existing world, but only evil. To despise the world with the Stoics, or to look for a Redeemer from another world with the Christians, became the only alternative.

A new element was brought into Christianity with the invasions of the barbarians, in that the old and decrepit Roman society with its antiquated system of production and decadent views of life had now combined with a youthful German society, organised on the basis of the mark—a people of simple thought and content to enjoy life; these elements combined to produce a strange new formation.

The Christian Church became the law which held the new State together. Here, again, the theory is apparently confirmed that the spirit is stronger than matter, and the intelligence of the Christian priesthood showed itself strong enough to tame the brute

force of the German barbarians. And, moreover, this brute force springing out of the material world, appeared to the representatives of Christianity as the source of all evil, when it was not ruled by spirit and held in check by the spirit; while, on the other hand, they saw in the spirit the source of all good.

Thus the new social situation only contributed to strengthening the philosophic foundation of Christianity and its system of Ethics. But, on the other hand, there came through this new situation the joy in life and a feeling of self-confidence into society which had been lacking at the time of the rise of Christendom. Even to the Christian clergy, at least in the mass, the world no longer appeared as a vale of tears, and they acquired a capacity for enjoyment, a happy Epicureanism, though certainly a coarser form and one which had little in common with ancient philosophy. Nevertheless the Christian priesthood was obliged to maintain the Christian Ethic, no longer as the expression of their own moral feeling, but as a means of maintaining their rule over the people. And everything forced them to recognise more and more the philosophic foundation of this system of Ethics, namely, the mastery of the spirit over the real world. Thus the new social situation produced on the one hand a tendency to a Materialist system of Ethics; while, on the other, a series of reasons arose to strengthen the traditional Christian Ethic. Thus arose that dual morality which became a characteristic of Christianity, the formal recognition of a system of Ethics, which is only partially the expression of our moral feeling and will, and consequently of that which controls our action. In other words, moral hypocrisy became a standing social institution which was never so widely spread as under Christianity.

Ethics and religion appeared now as inseparably bound together. Certainly the moral law was the logical creator of the new god; but in Christianity the new god appeared as the creator of the moral law. Without belief in God, without religion, no morality. Every ethical question became a theological one, and as the

most original and simple form of social indignation is the moral—the feeling of moral indignation, the feeling of the immorality of the existing institutions—so did every social uprising commence in the form of theological criticism, in which undeniably came, as an additional factor, the circumstance that the Church was played as the foremost means of class rule, and the Roman priesthood the worst exploiters in the Middle Ages, so that all rebellion against any form of exploitation always affected the Church in the first place.

Even after the Renaissance, at a time when philosophic thought had again revived, questions of Ethics remained for a very long time questions of theology.

## CHAPTER II.

### The Ethical Systems of the Period of the Enlightenment.

After the Renaissance the study of Nature again began to arouse interest, and with it also philosophy, which from then until well into the 18th century became principally natural philosophy, and, as such, raised our knowledge of the world to far above the level reached in the ancient world; they set out from the progress which the Arabs had made in Natural Science during the Middle Ages over the Greeks. The high-water mark of this development is certainly to be found in the theory of Spinoza (1632-1677).

With these thinkers Ethics occupied a secondary place. They were subordinated to Natural Science, of which they formed a part. But they came again to the front so soon as the rapid development of capitalism in Western Europe in the 18th century had created a similar situation to that which had been created by the economic awakening which followed on the Persian wars in Greece. Then began, to speak in modern language, a re-valuing of all values, and therewith a zealous thinking out and investigation into the foundation and essence of all morality. With that commenced an eager research into the nature of the new method of production. Simultaneously with the appearance of Ethics arose a science of which the ancients had been ignorant, the special child of the capitalist system of production, whose explanation it serves—Political Economy.

In Ethics, however, we find three schools of thought side by side, which often run parallel to the three systems of the Ancients—the Platonic, the Epicurean, and the Stoic. An anti-materialist one, the traditional Christian position; the materialist one; and finally a

middle system between the two. The optimism and joy of life in the rising bourgeoisie—at least in their progressive elements, especially among their intellectuals—felt itself strong enough to come forth openly and to throw aside all the hypocritical masks which the ruling Christianity had hitherto enforced. And miserable though frequently the present might be, the rising bourgeoisie felt that the best part of reality, the future, belonged to them, and they felt themselves capable of changing this Vale of Tears into a Paradise, in which each could follow his inclinations. In reality, and in the natural impulses of man, their thinkers saw the source of all good and not of all evil. This new school of thought found a thankful public, not only among the more progressive elements in the bourgeoisie, but also in the Court nobility, who at that period had acquired such a power that even they thought that they could dispense with all Christian hypocrisy in their life of pleasure, all the more as they were divided by a deep chasm from the life of the people. They looked on citizens and peasants as beings of a lower order to whom their philosophy was incomprehensible, so that they could freely and undisturbedly develop it without fear of shaking their own means of rule—the Christian Religion and Ethics.

The conditions of the new life and Ethics developed most vigorously in France. There they came most clearly and courageously to expression. Just as in the case of the ancient Epicureanism so in the new enlightenment philosophy of Lamettrie (1709-1751), Holbach (1723-1789), Helvetius (1715-1771), the ethic of egoism, of utility or pleasure stood in the closest connection with a Materialist view of the universe. The world, as experience presents it to us, appeared the only one which could be taken into account by us.

The causes of this new Epicureanism had great similarity with the ancient one, as well as the results at which both arrived. Nevertheless they differed in one very essential point. The old Epicureanism had not arisen as the disturber of the traditional religious views, it had understood how to accommodate itself to them.

It was not the theory of a revolutionary class; it did not preach war but contemplative enjoyment. Platonic Idealism and Theism represented far more the overthrow of the traditional religious views—a theory of the discontented classes.

But with the Philosophy of Enlightenment it was otherwise. Though certainly even this has a conservative root; it regarded contemplative enjoyment as happiness, that is, so far as it served the needs of the Court nobility, which drew its living from the existing absolutist State. But in the main it was the philosophy of the most intelligent and most developed as well as the most courageous elements in the bourgeoisie. It gave them a revolutionary character. Standing from the very beginning in the most absolute opposition to the traditional religion and Ethics, these classes acquired—in proportion as the bourgeoisie increased in strength and class consciousness—the conception of a fight—a conception quite foreign to the old Epicureans—a fight against priests and tyrants, a fight for the new ideals.

The nature and method of the moral views and the height of the moral passions are, according to human life, and especially by the constitution of the French Materialists, determined by the conditions of State, as well as by education. It is always self-interest that determines man; this can, however, become a very social interest, if society is so organised that the individual interest coincides with the interest of the community, so that the passions of men serve the common welfare. True virtue consists in the care for the commonweal; it can only flourish where the commonwealth at the same time advances the interests of the individual, where he cannot damage the commonwealth without damaging himself.

It is incapacity to perceive the more durable interests of mankind, ignorance as to the best form of government, society, and education which renders a state of affairs possible, which of necessity brings the individual interest into conflict with that of the community. It only remains to make an end to this ignorance to find

a form of State, society, and education corresponding to the demands of reason in order to establish happiness and virtue on a firm and eternal foundation. Here we arrive at the revolutionary essence of the French Materialism, which indicts the existing State as the source of immorality. With that it raises itself above the level of Epicureanism; but, at the same time, it weakens the position of its own Ethics.

For it is no mere question of inventing the best form of State and society. These have got to be fought for; the powers that be must be confronted and overthrown in order to establish an empire of virtue. That requires, however, great moral zeal, and where is that to come from if the existing society is so bad that it prevents altogether the growth of morality or virtue? Must not morality be already there in order that a higher society may arise? Is it not necessary that the moral should be alive in us before the moral order can become a fact? But how is a moral ideal to be evolved from a vicious world?

To that we obtain no satisfactory answer.

In very different fashion to the French did the Englishmen of the 18th century endeavour to explain the moral law. They showed themselves in general less bold and more inclined to compromise, in character with the history of England until the Reformation. Their insular position was especially favourable to their economic development during this period. They were driven thereby to make sea voyages, which in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, owing to the Colonial system, formed the quickest road to a fortune. It kept England free from all the burdens and ravages of wars on land, such as exhausted the European Powers. Thus in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries England acquired more wealth than all the Powers of Europe, and placed herself, so far as economic position was concerned, at their head. But when new classes and new class antagonisms, and with them new social problems arise in a country at an earlier date than elsewhere, the new classes attain only a small degree of class-consciousness, and still remain, to a

large degree, imprisoned in the old methods of thought, so that the class antagonisms appear in a very undeveloped form. Thus in such countries it does not at once come to a final and decisive struggle in the class war; it comes to no decisive overthrow of the old classes, who here continue to rule without any limit, and in all the neighbouring countries remain at the height of their power. The new classes are still incapable of taking on the government because they do not realise their own position in society, and alarmed by the novelty of their own endeavour, themselves seek for support and points of contact in the traditional relations.

It would thus seem to be a general law of social development that countries which are pioneers in the economic development are tempted to great compromises in the place of radical solutions.

For example, France in the Middle Ages stood by the side of Italy at the head of the economic development of Europe. She came more and more into opposition with the Papacy—their Government first rebelled against Rome. But just because she opened the way in this direction, she never succeeded in founding a national Church, and was only able to force the Papacy to a compromise which, with unimportant interruptions, has lasted up to the present. On the other hand, the most radical champions against the Papal power were the two States which were economically the most backward—Scotland and Sweden.

Since the Reformation, England, together with Scotland, has taken the place of France and Italy, the pioneers of her economic development, and thus compromise became for both these countries the form of the solution of their class struggles. Just because in England in the seventeeth century capital acquired power more rapidly than elsewhere, because there earlier than in other countries did it come to a struggle with the feudal aristocracy, this fight has ended with a compromise, which accounts for the fact that the feudal system of landed property is stronger in England even to-day than in any other country of Europe—

Austro-Hungary alone, perhaps, excepted. For the same reason—that of her rapid economic development—the class war between proletariat and bourgeoisie first blazed up in England, of all countries in the world. But it was before the proletariat and industrial capitalists had yet got over the small bourgeois method of thought, when many, and even clear-sighted observers, confused the two classes together as the industrial class, and when the type of the proletariat, class-conscious and confident in the future of his own class as well as that of the industrial capitalist, autocrat and unlimited ruler in the State, had not yet developed. Thus the struggle of the two classes landed, after a short and stormy flare-up, in a compromise, which gave the bourgeoisie for many years to come more unlimited power than in any other land with the modern system of production.

Naturally the effects of this law, just as that of any other, can be disturbed by unfavourable currents and advanced by favourable ones. But in any case it is so far efficacious that it is necessary to be on our guard against the crude popular interpretation of the materialism of history, as if it meant that that land which leads in the economic development will always bring the corresponding forms of the class-war to the most decisive expression.

Even Materialism and Atheism, as well as Ethics, were subject to the spirit of compromise, as it has ruled since the sixteenth century. The fight of the democratic and rising class against a governing power independent of the bourgeoisie, and subject to the feudal aristocracy, with their court nobility and their State Church, commenced in England more than a century before France, at a time when but few had surpassed the Christian form of thought. Where in France the fight against the State Church had become a fight between Christianity and atheistic Materialism, in England it had become merely a struggle between special democratic Christian sects and the State as an organised sect. And while in France in the period of enlightenment the majority of the intelligence and the

classes that came under its influence thought as Materialists and Atheists; the English intelligence searched for a compromise between Materialism and Christianity. Certainly it was in England that Materialism found its first public expression in the theory of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679); there certainly were to be found thinkers on ethical questions, whose courage surpassed that of the most courageous Frenchmen, who, like Mandeville (1670-1733), declared morality to be a means of rule, a discovery to keep the workers in subjection, and who regarded vice as the root of all social good. But such ideas had little influence on the thought of the many. A Christian profession remained the sign of respectability, and the pretence of this, even where not really felt, became the duty of every man of learning who did not wish to come into conflict with society.

Thus Englishmen remained very sceptical of the Materialistic Ethics which wished to found the moral law on self-love, or on the pleasure and utility of the individual. Certainly the intellectual circles of the rising bourgeoisie sought even in England to explain the moral law as a natural phenomenon, but they saw that its compulsion was not to be explained from simple considerations of utility, and that the combinations were too artificial which were required to unite the commands of morality with the motives of utility—still less to think of making out of the latter an energetic motive force of the former. Thus they distinguished very nicely between the sympathetic and the egoistic instincts in man, recognised a moral sense which drives man to be active for the good of his fellows. After the Irishman Hutcheson (1694-1747), the most distinguished representative of this theory was Adam Smith (1723-1790). In his two principal works he investigated the two main springs of human action. In the "Theory of Moral Sentiments" (1759) he started out from sympathy as the most important law of human society; while his "Wealth of Nations" assumes the egoism—the material interest of the individual—to be the mainspring of human action. That book appeared in 1776, but the principles which it contained were enunciated

by the author in Glasgow as early as 1752 or 1753. His theory of Egoism and his theory of Sympathy were not mutually exclusive, but were complementary one of the other.

This placing in contrast of egoism and moral sense by Englishmen, was as compared to the Materialists an approach to Platonism and Christianity. Nevertheless their views remained very different from these. While, according to Christianity, man is bad by nature, and according to the Platonic theory our natural impulses are the source of evil in us, so for the English school of the eighteenth century the moral sense was opposed certainly to egoism, but was just as much as the latter a natural impulse. Even egoism appeared here not as a bad but as a justifiable impulse which was as necessary for the welfare of society as sympathy with others. The moral sense was a sense just as any other human sense, and to a certain extent a sixth sense.

Certainly with this assumption, as in the case of the French Materialists, the difficulty was only postponed, not solved. To the question whence comes this peculiar sense in man the Englishman had no answer. It was given by Nature to man. That might suffice for those who traded in a creator of the universe, but it did not make this assumption superfluous.

The task for the farther scientific development of Ethics appeared clear in this state of the question. The French, as well as the English school, had achieved much for the psychological and historical explanation of the moral feelings and views. But neither the one nor the other could succeed in making quite clear that morality was the outcome of causes which lie in the realm of experience. The English school had to be surpassed and the causes of the moral sense investigated. It was necessary to go beyond the French school and to lay bare the causes of the moral ideal.

But the development moves in no straight but in a dialectical line. It moves in contradictions. So the next step of ethical philosophy did not go in this direction, but in the contrary. Instead of investigating the ethical nature of man in order to bring it more strictly than

ever under the general laws of nature, it came to quite other conclusions.

This step was achieved by German philosophy, with Kant (1724-1804). Certain people like to cry now, "Back to Kant!" But those meaning by that the Kantian Ethic might just as well cry, "Back to Plato!"

## CHAPTER III.

### The Ethics of Kant.

#### 1.—*The Criticism of Knowledge.*

Kant took the same ground as the Materialists. He recognised that the world outside of us is real, and that the starting-point of all knowledge is the experience of the senses. But the knowledge which we acquire from experience is partly composed of that which we acquire through the sense impressions and partly from that which our own intellectual powers supply from themselves; in other words, our knowledge of the world is conditioned not simply by the nature of the external world but also by that of our organs of knowledge. For a knowledge of the world therefore the investigation of our own intellectual powers is as necessary as that of the external world. The investigation of the first is, however, the duty of philosophy; while the second is the science of science.

In this there is nothing contained that every Materialist could not subscribe to, or that, perhaps with the exception of the last sentence, had not also been previously said by Materialists. But certainly only in the way in which certain sentences from the Materialist Conception of History had already been expressed before Marx, as conceptions which had not borne fruit. It was Kant who first made them the foundation of his entire theory. Through him did philosophy first become the science of science, whose duty it is not to teach a distinct philosophy but how to philosophise, the process of knowing, methodical thinking, and that by way of a critique of knowledge.

But Kant went farther than this, and his great philosophical achievement, the investigation of the faculties of knowledge, became itself his philosophical stumbling block.

Since our sensual experience does not reveal to us the world as it is in itself, but only as it is for us—as it appears to us—thanks to the peculiar constitution of our faculties of knowledge, so the world as it is in itself must be different to that which appears to us. Consequently Kant distinguishes between the world of phenomena, of appearances, and the world of things in themselves, the "noumena," or the intelligible world. This latter is for us unknowable, it lies outside of our experience, so that there is no need to deal with it; one might simply take it as a method of designating the fact that our knowledge of the world is always limited by the nature of our intellectual faculties, is always relative: that for us there can only be relative and no absolute truths, not a final and complete knowledge, but an endless process of knowing.

But Kant was not content with that. He felt an unquenchable longing to get a glimpse into that unknown and inexplorable world of things in themselves, in order to acquire at least a notion of it.

And indeed he got so far as to say quite distinct things about it. The way to this he saw in the critique of our powers of thought. These latter, by separating from experience that which comes from the senses, must arrive at the point of describing the forms of knowledge and perception as they originally and á priori, previous to all experience, are contained in our "feelings." In this manner he discovered the ideality of time and space. According to him, these are not conceptions which are won from experience, but simply the forms of our conception of the world, which are embedded in our faculties of knowledge. Only under the form of conceptions in time and space can we recognise the world. But outside of our faculties of knowledge there is no space and no time. Thus Kant got so far as to say about the world of things in themselves, that completely unknowable world, something very distinct, namely, that it is timeless and spaceless.

Without doubt this logical development is one of the most daring achievements of the human mind. That

does not say by any means that it is not open to criticism. On the contrary, there is a great deal to be said against it, and, in fact, they are very, very weighty objections which have been brought against it. The assumption of the ideality of space and time in the Kantian sense led to inextricable contradictions.

There can certainly be no doubt that our conceptions of time and space are conditioned by the constitution of our faculties of knowledge, but I should have thought that that would only necessarily amount to saying that only those connections of events in the universe can be recognised which are of such a nature as to call forth in our intellectual faculties the concepts of space and time. The ideality of time and space would then imply, just as the thing itself, no more and no less than a limit to our powers of knowing. Relations of a kind which cannot take the form of space or time concepts—even if such really exist, which we do not know—are for us inconceivable, just as much as the ultra-violet and ultra-red rays are imperceptible to our powers of vision.

But this was by no means the sense in which it was understood by Kant. Because space and time provide the forms in which alone our faculties of knowledge can recognise the world, he takes for granted that time and space are forms which are only to be found in our faculty of knowledge, and correspond to no sort of connection in the real world. In his "Prolegomena to every future Metaphysic," Kant compares in one place the concept of space with the concept of colour. This comparison appears to us very apt; it by no means, however, proves what Kant wants to prove. If cinnabar appears red to me, that is certainly conditioned by the peculiarity of my visual organs. Outside them there is no colour. What appears to me as colour is called forth by waves of ether, of a distinct length, which affect my eye. Should anyone wish to treat these waves in relation to the colour as the thing in itself, which in reality they are not, then our power of vision would not be a power to see the things as they are but power to see them as

they are not; not a capacity of knowledge, but of illusion.

But it is quite another matter when we look not at one colour alone but take several colours together and distinguish them from one another. Each of them is called forth by distinct ether waves of different lengths. To the distinctions in the colours there correspond differences in the length of the ether waves. These distinctions do not exist in my organ of vision, but have their ground in the external world. My organs of vision only have the functions of making me conscious of this difference in a certain form, that of colour. As a means to a recognition of this distinction it is a power of real knowledge and not of illusion. These distinctions are no mere appearances. The fact that I see green, red, and white has its ground in my organ of sight. But that the green should differ from the red, testifies to something that lies outside of me, to a real difference between the things.

Moreover, the peculiarity of my organ has the effect that by its means I can only recognise the motions of the ether. No other communication from the outer world can reach me through that medium.

Just as with the power of vision, in particular, so is it with the organs of knowledge in general. They can only convey to me space and time conceptions, that is, they can only show me those relations of the things which can call forth time and space conceptions in my head. To impressions of another kind, if there are any, they cannot react, and my faculty of knowledge renders it possible for me to obtain any impressions in a particular way. So far the categories of space and time are founded in the construction of my faculty of knowledge.

But the relations and distinctions of the things themselves, which are shown to me by means of the individul space and time concepts, so that the different things appear to me as big and small, near and far, sooner or later, are real relations and distinctions of the external world, which are not conditioned through the nature of my faculty of knowledge.

Therefore, even if we are not in a position to recognise a single thing by itself, if our faculties of knowledge are in respect to that faculties of ignorance, we can yet recognise the real differences between things. These distinctions are no mere appearances, even if our conception of them is conveyed to us by means of appearances; they exist outside of us, and can be recognised by us, though only under certain forms.

Kant, on the other hand, was of opinion that not simply are space and time forms of conception for us, but that even the temporal and spacial differences of phenomena spring solely from our heads, and notify nothing real. If that were really so, then would all phenomena spring simply from our heads, since they all take the form of temporal and spacial differences, then we could know absolutely nothing about the world outside of us, not even that it existed. Given that a world outside of us exists then, owing to the ideality of space and time, our faculty of knowledge would be not an imperfect, one-sided mechanism which communicated to us only a one-sided knowledge of the world, but, of its kind, a complete mechanism, namely, one to which nothing was lacking to cut us off from all knowledge of the world. Certainly a mechanism which can hardly be described as a "faculty of knowledge."

Thus in spite of Kant's energetic attack on the "mystical" idealism of Berkeley, which he had hoped to replace by his own critical idealism, his criticism took a turn which nullified his own assumption that the world is real and only to be known through experience, and thus mysticism, cast out from the one side, found on the other a wide, triumphal doorway open, through which it can enter with a flourish of trumpets.

### 2.—*The Moral Law.*

Kant assumed as his starting-point that the world is really external to us, and does not simply exist in our own heads, and that knowledge about it is only to be attained through experience. His philosophical achievement was to be the examination of the conditions of experience, of the boundaries of our knowledge. But just

this very examination became for him an incitement to surmount this barrier and to discover an unknowable world, of which he actually knew that it was of quite another nature than the world of appearances, that it was completely timeless and spaceless, and therefore causeless as well.

But why this break-neck leap over the boundaries of knowledge which cut away all firm ground beneath his feet? The position could not be a logical one, since through this leap he landed on contradictions which nullified his own assumptions. It was an historical reason which awakened in him the need for the assumption of a supersensuous world—a need which he must satisfy at any price.

If, in the eighteenth century, France was a hundred years behind England, just so much was Germany behind France. If the English bourgeoisie no longer needed Materialism, since without it, and on religious grounds, they had got rid of the feudalistic State and its Church, the German bourgeoisie did not yet feel strong enough to take up openly the fight against the State and its Church. They, therefore, withdrew in fear from Materialism. This came in the eighteenth century to Germany, just as to Russia : not as the philosophy of the fight but of pleasure, in a form suitable to the needs of the "enlightened" despotism. It grew within the princely courts, side by side with the narrowest orthodoxy. In the bourgeoisie there remained, however, even in its boldest and most independent pioneers, as a rule, a relic of Christian belief hanging to them, from which they could not emancipate themselves.

All this made the English philosophy appeal specially to German philosophers. In fact, its influence on Kant was very great. I cannot remember ever to have found in his writings any mention of a French Materialist of the eighteenth century. On the other hand, he quoted with preference Englishmen of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—Lock, Hume, Berkeley, and Priestley.

But between the German and English philosophy there was a great difference. The English philosophised at a time of great practical advance, of great practical struggles.

The practical captured their entire intellectual force; even their philosophy was entirely ruled by practical considerations. Their philosophers were greater in their achievements in economics, politics, and natural science, than in philosophy.

The German thinkers found no practicality which could prevent them from concentrating their entire mental power on the deepest and most abstract problems of science. They were therefore in this respect without their like outside of Germany. This was not owing to any race quality of the Germans but to the circumstances of the time. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the deepest philosophic thinkers were to be found in Italy, France, Holland, England, and not in Germany. The quiet that came over German political life in the century following the Thirty Years' War first gave Germany the lead in philosophy, just as Marx's "Capital" had its origin in the period of reaction following on 1848.

Kant, despite his sympathy for the English, could not find satisfaction in their philosophy. He was just as critical towards it as towards Materialism.

The weakest point in both cases was bound to strike him—the Ethics. It seemed to him quite impossible to bring the moral law into a necessary connection with nature, that is, with the world of phenomena. Its explanation required another world, a timeless and spaceless world of pure spirit, a world of freedom in contrast to the world of appearances (phenomena), which is ruled by the necessary chain of cause and effect. On the other hand, his Christian feelings, the outcome of a pious education, were bound to awaken the need for the recognition of a world in which God and immortality were possible.*

* As a curiosity it may be mentioned here that it is possible to confront Bernstein's witty remark "Kant against Cant" with the fact that Kant himself was Cant. "His ancestors came from

As Kant had to allow that God and immortality were completely superfluous in the world of our experience, he was obliged to look for a world "beyond" experience for them, and thus the spaceless and timeless world of things in themselves corresponded exactly to his needs.

The best proof for the existence of God and immortality in this world of the "beyond" Kant obtained from the moral law. Thus we find with him, as with Plato, that the repudiation of the naturalist explanation and the belief in a special world of spirits, or, if it be preferred, a world of spirits lending each other mutual support, render it necessary.

How, however, did Kant manage to obtain further insight into this spirit world? The "Critique of Pure Reason" only allowed him to say of it that it was timeless and spaceless. Now this spacelessness has to be filled up with a content. Even for that Kant has an idea.

The unknowable world of things in themselves becomes at least partly knowable directly one succeeds in getting hold of a thing in itself. And this Kant finds in *the personality of man.* I am for myself at once phenomenon and thing in itself. My pure reason is a thing in itself. As a part of the sensuous world I am subject to the chain of cause and effect, therefore to necessity, as a thing in itself I am free, that is, my actions are not determined by the causes of the world of the senses, but by the moral law dwelling within me, which springs from the pure reason and calls out to

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Scotland. . . . . The father a saddler by profession, maintained in his name the Scottish spelling Cant; the Philosopher first changed the letters to prevent the false pronounciation as Zant. (Kuno Fischer, "History of Modern Philosophy" Vol. III., page 52, German Ed.). His family were very religious and this influence Kant never got over. Not less than Kant is Cant related to puritan piety.

The word signified first the puritan method of singing, then the puritan, the religious, and finally the customary thoughtless oft-repeated phrases to which men submit themselves. Bernstein appealed in his assumption of Socialism for a Kant as an ally against the materialist "Party-Cant"

me not "Thou must," but "Thou shalt." If I were not free this "shall" would be an absurdity if there did not correspond to it a "can."

The moral freedom of man is certainly a complicated question, carrying with it no less contradictions than the ideality of time and space. Since this freedom comes to expression in actions which belong to the chain of cause and effect they are necessary. The same world of phenomena, as such falling beneath the actions are at the same time free and necessary. Moreover, freedom arises in the timeless, intelligible world, while cause and effect always fall in a particular time. The same time-determined action has thus a time as well as a cause in time.

But what is now the moral law which from the world of things in themselves, the "World of the Understanding," extends its working right into the world of appearances, the world of the "senses," and subordinates these to itself? Since it springs from the world of the understanding, its determining ground can only be in pure reason. It must be of purely formal nature, because it must remain fully free from all relation to the world of the senses, which would at once involve a relation of cause and effect, a determining ground of the will which would at once annihilate its freedom.

"There is, however," says Kant, in his "Critique of Practical Reason," "besides the matter of the law, nothing further contained than the law-giving form. Thus the law-giving form, so far as it is contained in the maxim, and that alone, can constitute a determining ground of free will."

From that he draws the following "Fundamental Law of Pure Practical Reason":—

"Act so that the maxim of thy action may be a principle of universal legislation."

This principle is by no means startlingly new. It forms only the philosophic translation of the ancient precept, to do unto others as we would be done by. This is only the declaration that this precept forms a revelation of an intelligible world; a revelation which

with the greatest application of philosophic insight was to be discovered as a principle which applied not only for humanity "but for all finite beings who possess reason and will, nay, even including the infinite being as the highest intelligence."

Unluckily, the proof for this law which was to apply even to the supreme intelligence has a very serious flaw to show. It ought to be "independent of all conditions pertaining to the world of the senses," but that is easier said than fulfilled. Just as little as it is possible with the air-pump to create a completely airless space; just as it must always contain air, though it be in so refined a degree that it is no more to be recognised by us, in the same way we cannot possibly grasp a thought, which is independent of all conditions appertaining to the world of senses. Even the moral law does not escape this fate.

The moral law already includes conditions which belong to the world of the senses. It is not a law of the "pure will" in itself, but a law of the control of my will or thought in contact with my fellow man. It assumes this; for me, however, these are appearances from the world of the senses.

And still more is assumed, however, by the conception of the moral law: "Act so that the maxim of thy action may be a principle of universal legislation." This assumes not only men outside of me, but also the wish that these fellow men should behave themselves in a particular manner. They are to behave themselves as the moral law prescribes me to act.

Here not only society, but also a distinct form of social conditions are assumed as possible and desirable.

That, in fact, the need for such is concealed in the ground of his "Practical Reason," and determines his spaceless and timeless moral law, Kant himself betrays in his "Critique of Practical Reason" in a polemic against the deduction of the moral law out of happiness:

"It is, therefore, surprising that intelligent men should have thought of calling the desire for happiness a universal *practical law* on the ground that the desire is

universal, and, therefore, also the *maxim* by which everyone makes this desire determine his will. For, whereas in other cases a universal law of nature makes everything harmonious, here, on the contrary, if we attribute to the maxim the universality of a law, the extreme opposite of harmony will follow the greatest opposition, and the complete destruction of the maxim itself, and its purpose. For, in that case, the will of all has not one and the same object, but everyone has his own (his private welfare), which may accidentally accord with the purposes of others which are equally selfish, but which is far from sufficing for a law, because the occasional exceptions which one is permitted to make are endless, and cannot be definitely embraced in one universal rule. In this manner, then, results a harmony like a married couple bent on going to ruin, 'O marvellous harmony, what he wishes she wishes also,' or, like what is said of the pledge of Francis I. to the Emperor Charles V., 'What my brother Charles wishes, that I wish also' (viz., Milan). Empirical principles of determination are not fit for any universal external legislation, but just as little for internal, for each man makes his own subject the foundation of his inclination, and in the same subject sometimes one inclination, sometimes another, has the preponderance. To discover a law which would govern them all under this condition, bringing them all into harmony, is quite impossible."*

Thus pleasure is not to be a maxim which can serve as a principle of universal legislation, and that because it can call forth social disharmonies. The moral law has thus to create a harmonious society, and such must be possible, otherwise it would be absurd to wish to create it.

The Kantian moral law assumes thus in the first place a harmonious society as desirable and possible. But it also assumes that the moral law is the means

*Kant's "Critique of Practical Reason," translated by T. W. Abbott, fourth editon revised, London, 1839. Section IV. Theorem III., pp. 115-6.

to create such a society, that this result can be achieved through a rule which the individual sets to himself. We see how thoroughly Kant was deceived when he thought that his moral law was independent of all conditions appertaining to the world of sense, and that it formed thus a principle which would apply to all timeless and spaceless spirits including God Almighty himself.

In reality Kant's moral law is the result of very concrete social needs. Naturally, since it springs from the wish for an harmonious society, it is possible to deduce from it the ideal of an harmonious society, and thus it has been possible to stamp Kant as a founder of Socialism. Cohen repeats this again also in his latest work, "Ethic of the Pure Will" (Ethik des reinen Willens), 1905. In reality, however, Kant is much farther removed from Socialism than the French Materialism of the eighteenth century. While, according to these, the moral law was determined by the condition of the State and society, so that the reform of morality rendered necessary, in the first place, the reform of the State and society, so that the fight against immorality widened itself into a fight against the ruling powers, according to Kant the society which exists in time and space is determined by a moral law standing outside of time and space, which directs its commands to the individual, not to society. Is the morality of the individual imperfect? One must not lay the blame for that on the State and society, but in the fact that man is not entirely an angel, but half animal and, consequently, always being drawn down by his animal nature, against which he can only fight through the raising and the purifying of this own inner man. The individual must improve himself if the society is to be improved.

It is clear Socialism takes peculair forms if we are to look on Kant as its founder. This peculiarity will be in no way diminished when we observe the further development of the moral law by him. From the moral law springs the consciousness of personality and the dignity of man, and the phrase: "Act so that you as well in

your own person as in the person of every other at all times look on man as an end and never simply as a means."

"In those words," says Cohen (pp. 303-4), "is the deepest and most far-reaching sense of the categoric imperative brought to expression; they contain the moral programme of the new time and the *entire world history*. The idea of the final (or end) advantage of humanity becomes thereby transformed into the idea of Socialism, by which every man is defined as a final end, as an end in itself."

The programme of the "entire future world history" is conceived in somewhat narrow fashion. The "timeless moral law, that man ought to be an end, and at no time simply a means," has itself only an "end" in a society where men are used by other men as simple means to their ends. In a communist society, this possibility will disappear, and with it the necessity of the Kantian programme for the "entire future world history." What then is to become of this? We have then in the future either no Socialism or no world history to expect.

The Kantian moral law was a protest against the very concrete feudal society with its personal relations of dependency. The so-called "Socialist" principle which fixes the personality and works of men is, accordingly just as consistent with Liberalism or Anarchism as with Socialism, and contains, in no greater degree any new idea than the one already quoted of the universal legislation. It amounts to the philosophical formula for the idea of "Freedom, Equality, and Fraternity" then already developed by Rousseau, and which was also to be found in primitive Christianity. Kant only imparted the form in which this principle is proved.

The dignity of personality is derived from the fact that it here forms part of a super-sensuous world, that as a moral being it stands outside nature and over nature. Personality is "freedom and independence from the mechanism of the entire natural world," so that "the person as belonging to the world of sense

is subordinate to its own personality as far as it belongs to the world of intelligence." Thus it is not then to be wondered if man, as belonging to both worlds, is obliged to look on his own being, with regard to its second and highest qualification, not otherwise than with respect, and to conceive the greatest respect for the laws of the same.

And with that we could congratulate ourselves on having got back to the early Christian argument for the equality of man, which is based on the fact that we are all children of God.

### *3.—Freedom and Necessity.*

Meanwhile, reject, as we must, the assumption of the two worlds to which, according to Plato and Kant, man belongs, it is nevertheless true that man lives at the same time in two worlds, and that the moral law inhabits one of them, which is not the world of experience. But all the same, even this world is no supersensuous one.

The two worlds in which man lives are the Past and the Future. The Present forms the boundary of the two. His whole experience lies in the past, all experience being as such necessarily of the past, and all the connecting links which past experience shows him lie with inevitable necessity before, or rather, behind him. In these there is nothing more left to alter; he can do nothing more in regard to them than recognise their necessity. Thus is the world of experience the world of knowing, and the world of necessity.

It is otherwise with the Future. Of this I cannot have the smallest experience. Apparently free, it lies before me as the world which I do not explore as one knowing it, but in which I have to assert myself as an active agent. Certainly I can extend the experience of the past into the future; certainly I can conclude that these will be even so necessarily determined as those; but even if I can only recognise the world on the assumption of necessity, yet I shall only be able to act in it on the assumption of a certain freedom. Even if a compulsion is exercised over my actions, there still

remains to me the choice whether I shall yield to it or not; there remains even as a last resort the possibility of withdrawing myself by a voluntary death. Action implies continual choice between various possibilities, and be it only that of doing or not doing, it means accepting or rejecting, defending or opposing. Choice, however, assumes, in advance, the possibility of choice, just as much as the distinction between the acceptable and inacceptable, the good and the bad. The moral judgment, which is an absurdity in the world of the past—the world of experience, in which there is nothing to choose, where iron necessity reigns—is unavoidable in the world of the unknown future—of freedom.

And not only the feeling of freedom is assumed by action, but also certain aims. Does there rule in the world of the past the sequence of cause and effect (causality), so in that of action, of the future, rules the thought of aim (teleology). For action the feeling of freedom is an indispensable psychological necessity, which is not to be got rid of by any degree of knowledge. Even the sternest Fatalism, the deepest conviction that man is a necessary product of his circumstances, cannot make us cease to love and hate, to defend and attack.

But all that is no monopoly of man, but holds also of the animals. Even these have freedom of the will, in the sense that man has, namely, as a subjective, inevitable feeling of freedom, which springs from ignorance of the future, and the necessity of exercising a direct influence on it.

And just in the same way they have command of a certain insight into the connection of cause and effect. Finally the conception of an end is not quite strange to them. In respect of insight into the past, and the necessity of nature on the one hand, and on the other in respect of the power of foreseeing the future, and the setting up of aims for their action the lowest specimens of humanity are distinguished far less from the animals than from civilised men.

The setting up of aims is not, however, anything which exists outside the sphere of necessity, of cause and effect. Even though I set up aims for myself only in the future, in the sphere of apparent freedom, yet the act of setting up aims itself, from the very moment when I set up the aim, belongs to the past, and can thus in its necessity be recognised as the result of distinct causes. That is not in any way altered by the fact that the attainment of the end is still in the future, in the sphere of uncertainty, thus in this sense in that of freedom. Let the attainment of the end be assumed as ever so far distant, the setting up of the aim itself lies in the past. In the sphere of freedom there lie only those aims which are not yet set up, of which we do not even know anything as yet.

The world of conscious aims is thus not the world of freedom in opposition to that of necessity. For each of the aims which we set ourselves, just as for each one of the means which we apply to its attainment, the causes are already given, and are, under certain circumstances, recognisable as those which brought about the setting up of these aims and determined the way in which that was to be achieved.

It is impossible, however, to distinguish the realm of necessity and of freedom simply as past and future; their distinction often coincides also with that of nature and society, or, to be more exact, of society, and that other nature from which the former displays only one particular and peculiar portion.

If we look at nature in the narrower sense as apart from society, and then at both in their relation to the future, we find at once a serious difference. The natural conditions change much slower than the social. And the latter at the period when men commenced to philosophise, at the period of the production of wares, had become extremely complicated, whereas in nature there are a large number of simple processes, whose subjection to law can be relatively easily perceived.

The consequence is, that despite our apparent freedom of action in the future, this action, nevertheless, as far as nature is concerned, comes to be looked on

as determined at an early period. Dark as the future lies before me, I know of a certainty that summer will follow winter, that to-morrow the sun will rise, that to-morrow I shall have hunger and thirst, that in winter the need for warming myself will occur to me, and that my action will never be directed to escaping these natural necessities, but exercised with the idea of satisfying them. Thus I recognise, despite all apparent freedom, that in face of nature my action is necessarily conditioned. The constitution of nature external to us, and of my own body, produce necessities which force on me a certain willing and acting which, being given according to experience, can be reckoned with in advance.

It is quite otherwise with my conduct to my fellow men, my social actions. In this case the external and internal causes, which necessarily determine my action, are not so easy to recognise. Here I meet with no overpowering forces of nature, to which I am obliged to submit myself, but with factors on a level with myself, men like myself, who by nature have no more strength than I have. Over against these I feel myself to be free, but they also appear to me to be free in their relations to their fellow men. Towards them I feel love and hate, and on them and my relations to them I make moral judgments.

Although the world of freedom and of the moral law is thus certainly another than that of recognised necessity, it is not a timeless, spaceless and supersensual world, but a particular portion of the world of sense seen from a particular point of view. It is the world as seen in its approach to us; the world on which we have to work, which we have to rearrange above all. But what is to-day the future will be to-morrow the past; thus what to-day is felt to be free action will be recognised to-morow as necesary action. The moral law in us, which regulates this action, ceases, however, with that to appear as an uncaused cause; it falls into the sphere of experience, and can be recognised as the necessary effect of a cause. And only as such are we at all able to recognise it, or can it become an

object of science. Thus in transferring the moral from the "this side"—the sensual world—to the "other side"—the supersensual world—Kant did not advance the scientific knowledge of it, but has instead closed all ways to it. This obstacle must be got rid of before everything else; we must rise above Kant if we are to bring the problem of the moral law nearer to its solution.

### *4.—The Philosophy of Reconciliation.*

It is the ethic which forms the weakest side of the Kantian Philosophy. And yet it is just through the ethic that its greatest success was achieved, because it met very powerful needs of the time.

French Materialism had been a philosophy of the battle against the traditional methods of thought, and consequently against the institutions which ruled them. An irreconcilable hatred against Christianity made it the watchword not only of the fight against the Church, but of that against all the social and political forces which were bound up with it.

Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason" equally drives Christianity from out of the Temple; but the discovery of the origin of the moral law, which is brought about by the "Critique of the Practical Reason," opens for it again the door with all due respect. Thus through Kant, Philosophy became, instead of a weapon of the fight against the existing methods of thought and institutions, a means of reconciling the antagonisms.

But the way of development being that of struggle, the reconciliation of antagonisms implies the arrest of development. Thus the Kantian Philosophy became a conservative factor.

Naturally, Theology was the greatest gainer by this. It served to emancipate the traditional belief from the quandary into which it had been forced by the development of science, in rendering the reconciliation of science and religion possible.

"No other science," says Zeller, "experienced the influence of the Kantian Philosophy in a higher degree

than Theology. Here Kant found the soil best prepared for his principles; with that, however, he brought to the traditional methods of thought a reform and an increase in depth, which it was badly in need of." (Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie, 1873, p. 519.)

Just after the outbreak of the French Revolution arose a specially strong need for a Theology which was in a position to hold its own against Materialism, and to drive it out of the field, among the educated people. Zeller writes then further—

"Kant's religious views corresponded exactly to both the moral and intellectual need of the time; it recommended itself to the enlightened by its reasonableness, its independence of the positive, its purely practical tendency; to the religious by its moral severity and its lofty conceptions of Christianity and its founder. German Theology from now on took Kant as their authority. His 'Moral Theology' became after a few years the foundation on which Protestant Theology in Germany, almost without exception, and even the Catholic one to a very large extent, was built up. The Kantian Philosophy, exercised for that reason—and the majority of German Theologians for close on fifty years took their start from it—a highly permanent and far-reaching influence on the general education."

Vosländer quotes in this "History of Philosophy" (Leipzig, 1903) the word of a modern German Theologian, Ritschl, who declared:—

"Thus the development of the method of knowledge by Kant implied at the same time a practical rebirth of Protestantism" (Vol. II., p. 476).

The great revolution created the soil for the influence of Kant, which was wrought in the two decades after the Terror. Then this influence began to wane. The bourgeoisie acquired after the thirties, even in Germany, strength and courage for more decisive struggles against the existing forms of State and thought, and to an unconditional recognition of the world of the senses as the only reality. Thus through the Hegelian dialectic there arose new forms of Materialism, and

in the most vigorous form in Germany, for the very reason that their bourgeoisie was still behind that of France and England, because they had not conquered the existing State machine, because they had that still to overturn; thus they required a fighting philosophy, and not one of reconciliation.

In the last decades, however, their desire to fight has greatly diminished. Within these, although they have not attained all that they desired, yet they had all which was necessary for their development. Further struggles on a large scale, or fights against the existing order, must be of much less use to them than to their great enemy, the proletariat, whose strength was increasing in a most menacing fashion, and who now for its part required a fighting philosophy. It was so much the more susceptible to the influence of Materialism the more the development of the world of the senses showed the absurdity of the existing order and the necessity of its victory.

The bourgeoisie, on the other hand, became more and more susceptible to a philosophy of reconciliation, and thus Kantism was aroused to a fresh life. This resurrection was prepared in the reactionary period after 1848 by the then commencing influence of Schopenhauer.

But in the last decade the influence of Kant has forced its way into Economics and Socialism. Since the laws of bourgeois society, which were discovered by the classical economists, showed themselves more clearly as laws which made the class war and the disappearance of the capitalist order necessary, the bourgeois economists took refuge in the Kantian Moral Code, which, being independent of time and space, must be in a position to reconcile the class antagonisms and prevent the revolutions which take place in space and time.

Side by side with the ethical school in economics we got an ethical Socialism, when endeavours were made in our ranks to modify the class antagonisms, and to meet at least a section of the bourgeoisie half way. This policy of reconciliation also began with the cry:

"Back to Kant!" and with a repudiation of Materialism, since it denies the freedom of the will. Despite the categoric imperative which the Kantian Ethic cries to the individual, its historical and social tendency from the very beginning on till to-day has been that of toning down, of reconciling antagonisms, not of overcoming them through struggle.

# CHAPTER IV.

## THE ETHICS OF DARWINISM.

### 1.—*The Struggle for Existence.*

KANT, like Plato, had divided mankind into two sides: into natural and supernatural, animal and angelic. But the strong desire to bring the entire world, including our intellectual functions, under a unitary conception and to exclude all factors beside the natural from it; or, in other words, the Materialist method of thought was too deeply grounded in the circumstances for Kant to be able to paralyse it for any length of time. And the splendid progress made by the material sciences, which began just at the very time of Kant's death to make a spurt forwards, brought a series of new discoveries, which more and more filled up the gap between men and the rest of nature, which among other things revealed the fact that the apparently angelic in man was also to be seen in the animal world, and thus was of animal nature.

All the same, the Materialist Ethics of the nineteenth century, so far as it was dominated by the conceptions of natural science, as much in the bold and outspoken form which it took in Germany as in the more retiring and modest English and, even now, French version, did not get beyond that which the eighteenth century had taught. Feuerbach founded morality on the desire for happiness; while Auguste Comte, the founder of Positivism, took, on the other hand, from the English the distinction between the moral or altruistic feelings and the egoistical feelings, both of which are equally rooted in human nature.

The first great and decided advance over this position was made by Darwin, who proved, in his book on the "Descent of Man," that the altruistic feelings formed no peculiarity of man, that they are also to be found in the animal world, and that there, as here, they spring

from causes which are in essence identical, and which have called forth and developed all the faculties of beings endowed with the power of moving themselves. With that almost the last barrier between man and animal was torn down. Darwin did not follow up his discoveries any further, and yet they belong to the greatest and most fruitful of the human intellect, and enable us to develop a new critique of knowledge.

When we study the organic world it reveals to us one very striking peculiarity as compared with the inorganic; we find in it adaptation to end. All organised beings are constructed and endowed more or less with a view to an end. The end which they serve is, nevertheless, not one which lies outside of them. The world as a whole has no aim. The aim lies in the individuals themselves: its parts are so arranged and fitted out that they serve the individual, the whole. Purpose and division of labour arise together. The essence of the organism is the division of labour just as much as adaption to end. One is the condition of the other. The division of labour distinguishes the organism from inorganic individuals, for example, crystals. Even crystals are distinct individuals, with a distinct form; they grow when they find the necessary material for their formation, under the requisite conditions; but they are through and through symmetrical. On the other hand, the lowest organism is a vesicle, much less visible and less complicated than a crystal; but a vesicle whose external side is different, and has different functions from the inner.

That the division of labour should be that one which is suitable for the purpose, that is, one which is useful to the individual, that which renders his existence possible, or even ameliorates it, seems wonderful. But it would be still more wonderful if individuals maintained themselves and procreated with a division of labour which was not suitable for the purpose, which rendered their existence difficult or even impossible.

But what is the work which the organs of the organism have to accomplish? This work is the struggle for life, that is, not the struggle with other organisms

of the same kind, as the word is occasionally used, but the struggle with the whole of nature. Nature is in continual movement, and is always changing her forms, hence only such individuals are able to maintain their form for any period of time in this eternal change who are in a position to develop particular organs against those external influences which threaten the existence of the individual, as well as to supply the places of those parts which it is obliged to give up continually to the external world. Quickest and best will those individuals and groups assert themselves whose weapons of defence and instruments for obtaining food are the best adapted to their end, that is, best adapted to the external world: to avoid its dangers and to capture the sources of food. This uninterrupted process of adaptation and selection of the fittest by means of the struggle for existence produces, under such circumstances as usually form themselves on the earth since it has borne organised beings, an increasing division of labour. In fact, the more developed the division of labour is in a society, the more advanced does that society appear to us. The continual process of rendering the organic world more perfect is thus the result of the struggle for existence in it, and probably for a long time to come will be its future result, as long as the conditions of our planet do not essentially alter. Certainly we have no right to look on this process as a necessary law for all time. That would amount to imputing to the world an end which is not to be found in it.

The development need not always proceed at the same rate. From time to time periods can come when the various organisms, each in its way, arrive at the highest possible degree of adaptation to the existing conditions, that is, are in the most complete harmony with their surroundings. So long as these conditions endure they will develop no farther, but the form which has been arrived at will develop into a fixed type, which procreates itself unchanged. A further development will only then occur when the surroundings undergo a considerable alteration: if when the inorganic nature is subject to changes which disturb the balance of the

organic. Such changes, however, take place from time to time, either single, sudden, and violent, or numerous and unnoticed, the sum total and effect of which, however, equally brings on new situations, as, for example, alterations in the ocean currents, in the surface of the earth, perhaps even in the position of the planet in the universe, which bring about climatic changes, transform thick forests into deserts of sand, cover tropical landscapes with icebergs, and vice versa. These alterations render new adaptations to the changed conditions necessary; they produce migrations which likewise bring the organisms into new surroundings, and produce fresh struggles for life between the old inhabitants and the new incomers, exterminate the badly-adapted and the unadaptable individuals and types, and create new divisions of labour, new functions and new organs, or transform the old. It is not always the highest developed organisms which best assert themselves by this new adaptation. Every division of labour implies a certain one-sidedness. Highly-developed organs, which are specially adapted for a particular method of life, are for another far less useful than organs which are less developed, and in that particular method of life less effective, but more many-sided and more easily adaptable. Thus we see often higher-developed kinds of animals and plants die out, and lower kinds take over the further development of fresh higher organisms. Probably man is not sprung from the highest type of apes, the man-apes, which are tending to die out, but from a lower species of four-handed animals.

### 2.—*Self-movement and Intelligence.*

At an early period the organisms divided themselves into two great groups: those which developed the organs of self-motion, and those which lacked it; animals and plants. It is clear that the power of self-movement is a mighty weapon in the struggle for life. It enables it to follow its food, to avoid dangers, to bring its young into places where they will be best secured from danger, and which are best provided with food.

Self-motion, however, necesarily implies an intelligence and vice versa. One of these factors without the other is absolutely useless. Only in combination do they become a weapon in the struggle for life. The power of self-movement is completely useless when it is not combined with a power to recognise the world in which I have to move myself. What use would the legs be to the stag if he had not the power to recognise his enemies and his feeding places? On the other hand, for a plant intelligence of any kind would be useless. Were the blade of grass able to see, hear or smell the approaching cow that would not in the least help it to avoid being eaten.

Self-movement and intelligence thus necessarily go together, one without the other is useless. Wherever these faculties may spring from, they invariably come up together and develop themselves jointly. There is no self-movement without intelligence, and no intelligence without self-movement. And together they serve the same ends : the securing and alleviation of the individual existence.

As a means to that they and their organs are developed and perfected by the struggle for life, but only as a means thereto. Even the most highly-developed intelligence has no capacities which would not be of use as weapons in the struggle for existence. Thus is explained the onesidedness and the peculiarity of our intelligence.

To recognise things in themselves may appear to many philosophers an important task ; for our existence it is highly indifferent, whatever we have to understand by the theory in itself. On the other hand, for every being endowed with power of movement it is of the greatest importance to rightly distinguish the things and to recognise their relations to one another. The sharper his intelligence in this respect the better service will it do him. For the existence of the singing bird it is quite indifferent what those things may be in themselves which appear to it as berries, hawks, or a thunder-cloud. But indispensable is it for its existence to distinguish exactly berries, hawks, and clouds

from the other things among his surroundings, since that alone puts him in a position to find his food, to escape the enemy, and to reach shelter in time. It is thus inevitable that the intelligence of the animal should be a power of distinguishing in space.

But just as indispensable is it to recognise the sequence of the things in time, and indeed this necessary sequence as cause and effect. Since the movement as cause can only then bring as a universal result the maintenance of existence, if it aims at special, more immediate, or remoter effects which are so much the more easily to be achieved, the better the individual has got to learn these effects with their causes. To repeat the above example of a bird : it is not sufficient that it should know how to distinguish berries, hawks and thunder-clouds from the other things in space, it must also know that the enjoyment of the berries has the effect of satisfying its hunger, that the appearance of the hawk will have the effect that the first small bird which it can grasp will serve it as food, and that the rising thunder-clouds produce storm, rain and hail as results.

Even the lower animal, so soon as it possesses a trace of ability to distinguish and self-movement, developes a suspicion of causality. If the earth shakes that is a sign for the worm that danger threatens and an incentive to flight.

Thus if the intelligence is to be of use to the animal in its movements it must be organised so that it is in a position to show it the distinctions in time and space as well as the casual connections.

But it must do even more. All the parts of the body serve only one individual, only one end—the maintenance of the individual. The division of labour must never go so far that the individual parts become independent, because that would lead to the dismemberment of the individual. They will work so much the more efficiently the tighter the parts are held together, and the more uniform the word of command. From this follows the necessary unity of the consciousness. If every part of the body had its own intellectual

organs or did each of the scenes which convey to us a knowledge of the outer world produce its own consciousness, then would all knowledge of the world in such a case and the co-operation of the various members of the body be much impeded, the advantages of the division of labour would be abolished, or changed into disadvantages, the support which the senses or the organs of movement mutually give to each other would cease, and there would come instead mutual hindrance.

Finally, however, the intelligence must possess, in addition, the power to gather experiences and to compare. To return once more to our singing bird : he has two ways open to him to find out where food is the best for him, and where it is easiest to be found ; what enemies are dangerous for him, and how to escape them. One his own experience, the other the observation of other and older birds, who have already had experience. No master is, as is well known, born. Every individual can so much the easier maintain himself in the struggle for life the greater his experiences and the better arranged they are ; to that, however, belongs the gift of memory and the capacity to compare former impressions with later ones, and to extract from them the common and the universal element, to separate the essential from the inessential—that is, to think. Does observation, the particular factor through the senses, communicate to us the differences, so does thinking tell us the common factor, the universal element in the things.

"The universal," says Dietzgen, "is the content of all concepts, of all knowledge, of all science, of all acts of thought. Therewith the analysis of the organs of thought show the latter as the power to investigate the universal in the particular."

All these qualities of the intellectual powers we find developed in the animal world, even if not in so high a degree as with men, and if often for us very difficult to recognise, since it is not always easy to distinguish conscious actions springing from intelligence from the involuntary and unconscious actions—simple reflex

actions and instinctive movements which even in men play a great rôle.

If we find all these qualities of the intellectual faculties to be a necessary concomitant of the power of self-movement already in the animal world, so do we, on the other hand, find in the same qualities also the same limitations which even the most embracing and most penetrating understanding of the highly-developed civilised man cannot surmount.

Forces and capacities which were acquired as weapons in the battle for existence can naturally be made available for other purposes as well as those of rendering existence secure when the organism has brought its power of self-movement and its intelligence as well as its instincts, of which we will speak later, to a high enough degree of development. The individual can employ the muscles, which were developed in it for the purpose of snatching its booty or warding off the foe, as well for dancing and playing. But their particular character is obtained by these powers and capacities all the same only from the struggle for life which developed them. Play and dance develop no particular muscles.

That holds good also of the intellectual powers and faculties as a necessary supplement to the power of self-movement in the struggle for life; developed in order to render possible to the organism the most suitable movement in the surrounding world for its own preservation, yet it could, all the same, be made to serve other purposes. To these belong also pure knowing without any practical thoughts in the background, without regard for the practical consequences which it can bring about. But our intellectual powers have not been developed by the struggle for existence to become an organ of pure knowledge, but only to be an organ which regulates our movements in conformity with their purpose. So completely does it function in respect of the latter, so incomplete is it in the first. From the very beginning most intimately connected with the power of self-movement, it develops itself completely only in mutual dependence on the power

of self-movement, and can only be brought to perfection in this connection. Also the power of the human faculties of cognition and human knowledge is most intimately bound up with human practice, as we shall see.

The practice it is, however, which guarantees to us the certainty of our knowledge. So soon as my knowledge enables me to bring about distinct effects the production of which lies in my power, the relation of cause and effect ceases for me to be simply chance or simple appearance, or simple forms of knowledge such as the pure contemplation and thought might well describe them. The knowledge of this relation becomes through the practice a knowledge of something real, and is thus raised to certain knowledge.

The boundaries of practice show certainly the boundaries of our certain knowledge. That theory and practice are dependent on one another, and only through the mutual permeation of the one by the other can at any time the highest results attainable be arrived at, is only an outcome of the fact that movement and intellectual powers from their earliest beginnings were bound to go together. In the course of the development of human society the duration of labour has brought it about that the natural unity of these two factors should be destroyed, and created classes to whom principally the movement, and others to whom principally the knowing, fell. We have already pointed out how this was reflected in philosophy through the creation of two worlds, a higher or intellectual and a lower or bodily. But naturally in no individual were the two functions ever to be wholly divided, and the proletariat movement of to-day is directing its energies with good effect to abolishing this distinction, and with it also the dualist philosophy, the philosophy of pure knowledge. Even the deepest, most abstract, knowledge, which apparently is farthest removed from the practical, influence this, and are influenced by it, and to bring in us this influence to consciousness becomes the duty of a critique of human knowledge. As before, knowledge remains in

the last resort always a weapon in the struggle for existence, a means to give to our movements, be they movements in nature or society, the most suitable forms and directions.

"Philosophers have only interpreted the world differently," said Marx. "The great thing, however, is to change it."

*3.—The Motives of Self-Maintenance and Propagation.*

Both the powers of self-movement and of knowing belong thus inseparably together as weapons in the struggle for existence. The one developed itself along with the other, and in the degree in which these weapons gain in importance in the organism, others, more primitive, lose, being less necessary, as, for example, that of fruitfulness and of vital force. On the other hand, to the degree that these diminish must the importance of the first-named factors for the struggle for life increase, and it must call forth their greater development.

But self-movement and knowledge by no means form by themselves a sufficient weapon in the struggle. What use are to me in this struggle the strongest muscles, the most agile joints, the sharpest senses, the greatest understanding, if I do not feel in me the impulse to employ them to my preservation; if the sight of food or the knowledge of danger leaves me indifferent and awakens no emotion in me? Self-movement and intellectual capacity first then become weapons in the struggle for existence, if with them there arises a longing for the self-preservation of the organism; which brings it about that all knowledge which is of importance for its existence at once produces the will to carry out the movement necessary for its existence, and therewith calls forth the same.

Self-movement and intellectual powers have no importance for the existence of the individual without this instinct of self-preservation, just as this latter again is of no importance without both the former factors. All the three are most intimately bound up with each other. The instinct of self-preservation is the most

primitive of the animal instincts, and the most indispensable. Without it no animal species endowed in any degree with the power of self-movement and a faculty of intelligence could maintain itself even a short time. It rules the entire life of the animal. The same social development which ascribes the care of the intellectual faculties to particular classes and the practical movement to others, and produces in the first an elevation of the "spirit" over the coarse "matter," goes so far in the process of isolating the intellectual faculties, that the latter, out of contempt for the "mechanical" action which serves for the maintenance of life, comes to despise life itself. But this kind of knowledge has never as yet been able to overcome the instinct of self-preservation, and to paralyse the "action" which serves for the maintenance of life. Nay, even a suicide may be philosophically grounded; we always in every practical act of the denial of life finally meet with disease or desperate social circumstances as the cause, but not a philosophical theory. Mere philosophising cannot overcome the instinct of self-preservation.

But if this is the most primitive and widely-spread of all instincts, so is it not the only one. It serves only for the maintenance of the individual. However long this may endure, finally it disappears without leaving any trace of its individuality behind, if it has not reproduced itself. Only those species of organisms will assert themselves in the struggle for existence who leave a progeny behind them.

Now with the plants and the lower animals the reproduction is a process which demands no power of self-movement and no faculty of intelligence. That changes, however, with the animals so soon as the reproduction becomes sexual, in which two individuals are concerned, who have to unite in order to lay either eggs and sperm on the same spot outside of the body, or to incorporate the sperm in the body of the individual carrying the eggs.

That demands a will, an impulse to find each other, to unite. Without that the non-sexual propagation cannot take place; the stronger it is in the periods

favourable for reproduction, so much the sooner will it take place, so much the better will be the prospects of a progeny for the maintenance of the species. On the other hand, there is little prospect for those individuals and species in whom the impulse for self-reproduction is weakly developed. Consequently, from a given degree of the devlopment, natural selection must develop, through the struggle for life, an outspoken impulse to reproduction in the animal world, and evermore strengthen it. But it does not always suffice to the attainment of a numerous progeny. We have seen that in the degree in which self-movement and intellectual powers grow, the number of the germs which the individual produces, as well as its vitality, have a tendency to diminish. Also, the greater the division of labour, the more complicated the organism, the longer the period which is requisite for its development and its attainment to maturity. If a part of this period is passed in the maternal body, that has its limits. Even from consideration of space this body is not in a position to bear an organism as big as itself; it must expel the young body previously to that. In the young animals, however, the capacities for self-movement and intelligence are the latest achieved, and they are mostly very weakly developed as they leave the protecting cover of the egg or the maternal body. The egg expelled by the mother is completely without motion and intelligence. Then the care for the progeny becomes an important function of the mother: the hiding and defence of the eggs and of the young, the feeding of the latter, etc. As with the impulse for reproduction, so is it with the love for the young; especially in the animal world the maternal love is developed as an indispensable means, from a certain stage of the development on, to secure the perpetuation of the species. With the impulse towards individual self-preservation these impulses have nothing to do; they often come into conflict with it, and they can be so strong that they overcome it. It is clear that under otherwise equal conditions those individuals and species have the best prospect of repro-

ducing themselves and handing on their qualities and impulses in whom the impulse of self-maintenance is not able to diminish the impulse to reproduce and protect the progeny.

### *4.—The Social Instinct.*

Beside these instincts which are peculiar to the higher animals, the struggle for life develops in particular kinds of animals still others, which are special and conditioned by the peculiarity of their method of life; for example, the migratory instinct, which we will not further study. Here we are interested in another kind of instinct, which is of very great importance for our subject: the social instinct.

The co-operation of similar organisms in larger crowds is a phenomenon which we can discover quite in their earliest stages in the microbes. It is explained alone by the simple fact of reproduction. If the organisms have no self-movement, the progeny will, consequently, gather round the producer, if they are not by any chance borne away by the movements of the external world matter: currents, winds, and phenomena of that sort. The apple falls, as is well known, not far from the stem, and when it is not eaten, and falls on fruitful soil, there grow from its pips young trees, which keep the old tree company. But even in animals with power of self-movement it is very natural that the young should remain with the old if no external circumstances supply a ground for them to remove themselves. The living together of individuals of the same species, the most primitive form of social life, is also the most primitive form of life itself. The division of organisms, having common origin is a later act.

The separation can be brought about by the most diverse causes. The most obvious, and certainly the most effective, is the lack of sustenance. Each locality can only yield a certain quantity of food. If a certain species of animals multiplies over the limits of their food supply, the superfluous ones must either

emigrate or starve. Beyond a certain number the number of organisms living in one place cannot go.

But there are certain species of animals for whom the isolation, the division in individuals or pairs who live only for themselves, is the form of living which affords an advantage in the struggle for existence. Thus, for example, the cat species, which lie in wait for their booty, and take it with an unexpected spring. This method of acquiring their sustenance would be made more difficult, if not impossible, did they circulate in bigger herds. The first spring on the booty would drive all the game away for all the others. For wolves, which do not come unexpectedly on their prey, but worry it to death, the foregathering in herds affords an advantage; one hunts the game to the other, which blocks the way for it. The cat hunts most successfully alone. Again, there are animals who choose isolation because thus they are less conspicuous, and can most easily hide themselves, and soonest escape the foe. The traps set by men have, for example, had the effect that many animals which formerly lived in societies are now only to be found isolated, such as the beavers in Europe. That is the only way for them to remain unnoticed.

On the other hand, however, there are numerous animals which draw advantage from their social life. They are seldom beasts of prey. We have mentioned the wolf above. But even they only hunt in bands when food is scarce in winter; in summer, when it is easier to get, they live in pairs. The nature of the beast of prey is always inclined to fighting and violence, and, consequently, does not agree well with its equals. The herbivora are more peaceful from the very manner in which they obtain their food. That very fact in itself renders it easier for them to herd together, or to remain together, because they are more defenceless; they will, however, through their greater numbers, need weapons in the struggle for life. The union of many weak forces to common action can produce a new and greater force. Then, through union, the greater strength of certain individuals is for the good

of all. Unless the stronger ones fight now for themselves, they fight for the good of the weaker; when the more experienced look out for their own safety, find out for themselves feeding grounds, they do it also for the inexperienced. It then becomes possible to introduce a division of labour among the united individuals, which, fleeting though it be, yet increases their strength and their safety. It is impossible to watch the neighbourhood with the most complete attention and at the same time to feed peacefully. Naturally, during sleep, all observation of any kind comes to an end. But in unity one watcher suffices to render the others safe during sleep or while eating.

Through the division of labour the union of individuals becomes a body with different organs to cooperate to a given end, and this end is the maintenance of the collective body—it becomes an organism. With that is by no means implied that the new organism or society is a body in the same way as an animal or a plant, but it is an organism of its own kind, which is far more widely distinguished from these two than the animal from the plant. Both are made up from cells without power of self-motion and without consciousness of their own; society, on the other hand, from individuals with their own power of self-movement and consciousness. If, however, the animal organism has as a whole a power of self-motion and consciousness, they are lacking, nevertheless, to society as well as to the plants. But the individuals which form the society can entrust individuals among their members with functions through which the social forces are submitted to a uniform will, and uniform movements in the society are produced.

On the other hand the individual and society are much more loosely connected than the cell and the whole organism in both plant and animal. The individual can separate itself from one society and join another, as emigration proves. That is impossible for a cell; for it the separation from the whole is death, if we leave certain cells of a particular kind out of account, such as the sperma and eggs, in the pro-

creation processes. Again society can forthwith impose on new individuals any change of form without any change of substance, which is impossible for an animal body. Finally, the individuals who form society can, under circumstances, change the organs and organisation of society, while anything of that kind is quite impossible in an animal or vegetable organism.

If, therefore, society is an organism, it is no animal organism, and to attempt to explain any phenomena peculiar to society from the laws of the animal organism is not less absurd than when the attempt is made to deduce peculiarities of the animal organism and self-movement and consciousness from the laws of the vegetable being. Naturally this does not imply that there is not also something common to the various kinds of organisms.

As the animal so also the social organism survives so much the better in the struggle for existence the more unitary its movements, the stronger the binding forces, the greater the harmony of the parts. But society has no fixed skeleton which supports the weaker parts, no skin which covers in the whole, no circulation of the blood which nourishes all the parts, no heart which regulates it, no brain which makes a unity out of its knowing, its willing, and its movements. Its unity and harmony, as well as its coherence, can only arise from the actions and will of its members. This unitary will, however, will be so much the more assured the more it springs from a strong impulse.

Among species of animals, in whom the social bond becomes a weapon in the struggle for life, social impulses become encouraged which, in many species and many individuals, grow to an extraordinary strength, so that they can overcome the impulse of self-preservation and reproduction when they come in conflict with the same.

The commencement of the social impulse we can well look for in the interest which the simple fact of living together in society produces in the individual for his fellows, to whose society he is used from youth on.

On the other hand, reproduction and care for the progeny already render longer or shorter relations of a more intimate kind necessary between different individuals of the same species; and just as these relations have formed the starting point for the formation of societies, so could the corresponding impulses well give the point of departure for the development of the social impulses.

These impulses themselves can vary according to the varying conditions of the various species, but a row of impulses form the requisite conditions for the success of any kind of society. In the first place, naturally, altruism—self-sacrifice for the whole. Then bravery in the defence of the common interests; fidelity to the community; submission to the will of society, thus obedience and discipline; truthfulness to society, whose security is endangered, or whose energies are wasted, when they are misled in any way by false signals. Finally ambition, the sensibility to the praise and blame of society. These are all social impulses which we find expressed already among animal societies, many of them in a high degree.

These social impulses are, nevertheless, nothing less than the highest virtues; they sum up the entire moral code. At the most they lack the love for justice, that is the impulse towards equality. For its development there certainly is no place in the animal societies, because they only know natural and individual inequality, and not those called forth by social relations, the social inequalities. The lofty moral law that the comrade ought never to be merely a means to an end—which the Kantians look on as the most wonderful achievement of Kant's genius, as the moral programme of the modern era, and as essential to the entire future history of the world—is in the animal world a commonplace. The development of human society first created a state of affairs in which the companion became a simple tool of others.

What appeared to Kant as the creation of a higher world of spirits is a product of the animal world. How closely the social impulses have grown up with

the fight for existence and to what an extent they originally were useful in the preservation of species can be seen from the fact that their effect often limits itself to individuals whose maintenance is advantageous for the species. Quite a number of animals which risk their lives to save younger or weaker comrades kill without a scruple sick or aged comrades that are superfluous for the preservation of the race, and are become a burden to society. The "moral sense," "sympathy," does not extend to these elements. Even many savages behave in this manner.

The moral law is an animal impulse, and nothing else. Thence its mysterious nature, this voice in us which has no connection with any external impulse or any apparent interest; this demon or god, which, since Socrates and Plato, has been found in themselves by those moralists who refused to deduce morality from self-love or pleasure. Certainly a mysterious impulse, but not more mysterious than sexual love, maternal love, the instinct of self-preservation, the being of the organism itself, and so many other things, which only belong to the world of phenomena, and which no one looks on as products of a supersensuous world.

Because the moral law is an animal instinct of equal force to the instinct of self-preservation and reproduction, thence its force, thence its power which we obey without thought, thence our rapid decisions, in particular cases, whether an action is good or bad, virtuous or vicious; thence the energy and decision of our moral judgment, and thence the difficulty to prove it when reason begins to analyse its grounds. Thence, finally, we find that to comprehend all means to pardon all, that everything is necessary, that nothing is good or bad.

Not from our organs of knowing but from our impulses come the moral law and the moral judgment, as well as the feeling of duty and the conscience.

In many kinds of animals the social impulses attain such a strength that they become stronger than all the rest. When the former come in conflict with the latter, they then confront the latter with overpowering

strength as commands of duty. Nevertheless, that does not hinder in such a case a special impulse, say of self-preservation or of reproduction, being temporarily stronger than the social impulse and overcoming it. But as the danger passes the strength of the self-preserving impulse or the reproductive instinct diminishes, just as that of reproduction after the completion of the act. The social instinct remains, however, existing in the old force, regains the dominion over the individual, and works now in him as the voice of conscience and of repentance. Nothing is more mistaken than to see in conscience the voice of fear of his fellows, their opinion, or even their power of physical compulsion. It has effect even in respect to acts which no one has heard of, even acts which may appear to those nearest as very praiseworthy; it can even act as repugnance to acts which have been undertaken from fear of his fellows and their public opinion.

Public opinion, praise and blame, are certainly very influential factors. But their effect assumes in advance a certain social impulse—namely, ambition—they are not capable of producing the social impulses.

We have no reason to assume that conscience is confined to man. It would be difficult to discover even in men if everyone did not feel its effect on himself. Conscience is certainly a force which does not obviously and openly show itself, but works only in the innermost being. But, nevertheless, many investigators have gone so far as to point, even in animals, to a kind of conscience. Darwin says in his book, "The Descent of Man":—

"Besides love and sympathy, the animals show other qualities connected with the social instincts which we should call moral in men; and I agree with Agassiz that dogs have something very like a conscience. Dogs certainly have a certain power of self-control, and this does not appear to be altogether a consequence of fear. As Braubach remarks, 'A dog will restrain itself from stealing food in the absence of its master.'"

If conscience and feeling of duty are a consequence of the lasting predominance of the social impulses in many species of animals, if these impulses are those through which the individuals of such species are the most constantly and most enduringly determined, while the force of the other impulses is subject to great oscillations, yet the force of the social impulse is not free from all oscillations. One of the most peculiar phenomena is this: that social animals when united in greater numbers also feel stronger social impulses. It is, for example, a well-known fact that an entirely different spirit reigns in a well-filled meeting than in a small one; that the bigger crowd has in itself alone an inspiring effect on the speaker. In a crowd the individuals are not only more brave—that could be explained through the greater support which each believes he will get from his fellows—they are also more unselfish, more self-sacrificing, more enthusiastic. Certainly only too often so much the more calculating, cowardly and selfish when they find themselves alone. And that applies not only to men, but also to the social animals. Thus Espinas in his book, "The Animal Societies," quotes an observation of Forel. The latter found:—

"The courage of every ant, by the same form, increases in exact proportion to the number of its companions or friends, and decreases in exact proportion the more isolated it is from its companions. Every inhabitant of a very populous ant heap is much more courageous than are similar ones from a small population. The same female worker which would allow herself to be killed ten times in the midst of her companions, will show herself extraordinarily timid, avoid the least danger, fly before even a much weaker ant, so soon as she finds herself twenty yards from her own home."

With the stronger social feeling there need not be necessarily bound up a higher faculty of intelligence. It is probable that, in general, every instinct has the effect of somewhat obscuring the exact observation of the external world. What we wish, that we readily believe; but what we fear, that we easily exaggerate. The instincts can very easily produce the effect that many

things appear disproportionately big or near, while others are overlooked. How blind and deaf the instinct for reproduction can render many animals at times is well known. The social instincts which do not show themselves as a rule so acutely and intensively, generally obscure much less the intellectual faculties; they can, however, influence them very considerably on occasion. Think, for instance, of the influence of faithfulness and discipline upon sheep, who follow their leading sheep blindly wherever it may go.

The moral law in us can lead our intellect astray just as any other impulse, being itself neither a producer nor a product of wisdom. What is apparently the most devoted and divine in us is essentially the same as that which we look on as the commonest and most devilish. The moral law is of the same nature as the instinct for reproduction. Nothing is more ridiculous than when the former is put on a pedestal and the latter is turned away from with loathing and contempt. But no less false is it to infer that man can, and ought, to give way to his impulses without check. That is only so far true as it is impossible to condemn any one of these as such. But that by no means implies that they cannot come to cross purposes. It is simply impossible that anyone should follow all his instincts without restraint, because they restrain one another. Which, however, at a given moment wins, and what consequences this victory may bring to the individual and his society with it, neither the ethic of pleasure nor those of a moral law standing outside of space and time afford us any help to divine.

If, however, the moral law were recognised as a social instinct which, like all the instincts, is called out in us by the struggle for life, then the supersensuous world has lost a strong support in human thought. The simple gods of Polytheism were already dethroned by natural philosophy. If, nevertheless, a new philosophy could arise which not only revealed the belief in God and a supersensuous world, but put it more firmly in a higher form, as was done in ancient times by Plato and on the eve of the French Revolu-

tion by Kant, the cause lay in the fact that the problem of the moral law, to whose explanation neither its deduction from pleasure nor from the moral sense sufficed—while it yet offered the only "natural" causal explanation which seemed possible. Darwinism was the first to make an end to the division of man, which this rendered necessary, into a natural and animal being on the one hand and a supernatural and heavenly one on the other.

But with that the entire ethical problem was not yet solved. Were it attempted to explain moral impulse, duty, and conscience as well as the ground type of the virtues from the social impulse, yet this breaks down when it is a question of explaining the moral ideal. Of that there is not the least sign in the animal world; only man can set himself ideals and follow them. Whence come these? Are they prescribed to the human race from the beginning of time as an irrevocable demand of nature, or an eternal reason—as commands which man does not produce, but which confront man as a ruling force and show him the aims to which he has ever more and more to strive after? That was, in the main, the view of all thinkers of the eighteenth century, Atheists as well as Theists, Materialists and Idealists. This view took, even in the mouth of the boldest Materialism, the tendency to assume a supernatural providence, which indeed had nothing more to do in nature, but still hovers over human society. The evolution idea which recognised the descent of man from the animal world made this trend of idealism absurd in a Materialist mouth.

All the same, before Darwin founded his epoch-making work, that theory had arisen which revealed the secret of the moral ideal. This was the theory of Marx and Engels.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE ETHICS OF MARXISM.

*1.—The Roots of the Materialist Conception of History.*

THE rapid progress of the natural sciences since the French Revolution is intimately connected with the expansion of capitalism from that time on. The great capitalist industry depended more and more on the application of science, and, consequently, had every reason to supply it with men and means. Modern technique gives to science not only new objects of activity, but also new tools and new methods. Finally international communication brought a mass of new material. Thus was acquired strength and means to carry the idea of evolution successfully through.

But even more than for natural science was the French Revolution an epoch of importance for the science of society, the so-called mental sciences. Because in natural science the idea of evolution had already given a great stimulus to many thinkers. In mental science, on the other hand, it was only to be found in the most rudimentary attempts. Only after the French Revolution could it develop in them.

The mental sciences—Philosophy, Law, History, Political Economy—had been for the rising bourgeoisie before the French Revolution, in the first place, a means of fighting the ruling powers, social and political, which opposed them, and had their roots in the past. To discredit the past, and to paint the new and coming, in contrast to it, as the only good and useful, formed the principal occupation of these sciences.

That has altered since the Revolution. This gave the bourgeoisie the essence of what they wanted. It revealed to them, however, social forces which wanted to go further than themselves. These new forces began to be more dangerous than the relics of the deposed

old. To come to an agreement with the latter became merely a requirement of political sagacity on the part of the bourgeoisie. With that, however, their opinion on the past was bound also to grow milder.

On the other hand the Revolution had brought a great disillusionment to the Idealogues themselves. Great as were its achievements for the bourgeoisie, they are not yet up to the expectations of an harmonious empire of "morality," general well-being, and happiness, such as had been looked for from the overthrow of the old. No one dared to build hopes on the new; the more unsatisfactory the present, so much the more terrifying were the reminiscences of the most recent past which the present had brought to a head, so much the more bright did the farther past appear. That produced, as is well known, Romanticism in art. But it produced also similar movements in the mental sciences. Men began to study the past, not in order to condemn it, but to understand it; not to show up its absurdity, but to understand its reasonableness.

But the Revolution had done its work too thoroughly for men to dream of re-establishing what had been set aside. Had the past been rational, so it was necessary to show that it had become irrational. The socially necessary and reasonable ceased with that to appear as an unchangeable conception. Thus arose the view of a social evolution.

That applied first to the knowledge of German history. In Germany the above-described process was most markedly to be seen; there the revolutionary method of thought had not penetrated so deeply, had never struck such deep roots as in France; there the work of the Revolution had not been so complete, the forces and opinions of the past had been shaken in a less degree, and finally had appeared on the scene more as a disturbing than an emancipating element.

But to the study of the German past there associated itself the investigation of similar periods. In America the young community of the United States was already so far advanced that a separate class of the intellectuals had been able to develop a real

American literature and science. What specially distinguished America from Europe was, however, the close contact of the capitalist civilisation of the white man with Indian barbarism. That was the object which especially attracted literature and science. Soon after the German Romanticism there arose the American-Indian novel, and soon after the rise of the historical school of law, the revival of the old fancy tales and the world of legends, and the comparative philological research in Germany, and the scientific theory of the social and linguistic conditions of the Indians in America.

At an earlier period, however, the settlement of the English in India had afforded the possibility, nay the necessity of a study of the languages, the customs, and the laws of these territories. As far as Germany there had penetrated, at the commencement of the nineteenth century, the knowledge of Sanskrit, which laid the foundation for the comparative study of languages, which in its turn afforded the most valuable insight into the life of the Indo-Germanic peoples in primitive times.

All this rendered it possible to treat the accounts given by civilised observers of primitive peoples, as well as the discoveries of weapons and tools of vanished races, differently from formerly, when they had been simply looked on as curiosities. They now became material by which to extend the partly-revealed chain of human development still further into the past, and to close up many of the gaps.

In this entire historical work there was lacking, however, the object which had, up to then, ruled the entire writing of history—the great man theory. In the written sources, from which formerly the knowledge of human history was exclusively culled, only the extraordinary had been related, because it was that only which seemed noteworthy to the chronicler of the events of his time. To describe everyday occurrences, that which everybody knew, was by no means his task. The extraordinary man, the extraordinary event, such as wars and revolutions, only seemed worth relating. Thus it was that for the traditional historians, who never got beyond writing up from the sources handed

down to them with more or less criticism, the big man was the motive power in history—in the Feudal period the king, the military commander, the religious founder, and the priest. In the eighteenth century there were very many men branded by the bourgeois intellectuals as the authors of all the evil in the world, and the philosophers, on the other hand, as legislators and teachers, as the only real instruments of progress. But all progress appeared to be only external, a simple change of clothes. That period in which the sources of historical writing began to flow more abundantly, the time of the victory of the Greeks over the Persian invasion, was the culminating period of the social development. From that time on society in the lands round the Mediterranean began to decay; it went down and down till the Barbarian Immigration. Only slowly have the peoples of Europe since then developed themselves again to a higher level socially, and even in the eighteenth century they had not risen far above the level of classical antiquity, so that in many points of politics, of philosophy, and especially of art, the latter could rank as a pattern.

History, as a whole, appeared simply as a rise and fall, a repetition of the same circle, and just as the simple individual can set himself continually higher aims than he arrives at, because as a rule he fails, so did this circle appear as a horrible tragi-comedy in which all that was most elevated and strongest was doomed to play wretched parts.

Quite otherwise was it with primitive history. That, with its individual departments, history of law, comparative philology, ethnology, found in the material which these worked up, not the extraordinary and the individual, but the everyday and common-place described. But for this very reason primitive history can trace with certainty a line of continuous development. And the more the material increases the more it is possible to compare like with like, the more it is discovered that this development is no chance, but according to law. The material which is at our disposal is, on the one side, facts of the technical arrangements of life, on the

other, of law, custom and religion. To show the law controlling this, means nothing else than to bring technics into a causal connection with the legal, moral, and religious conceptions without the help of extraordinary individuals or events.

This connection was, however, discovered almost simultaneously from another side, namely statistics.

So long as the parish was the most important economic institution statistics were hardly required. In the parish it was easy to get a view of the state of affairs. But even if statistics were made then, they could scarcely suggest scientific observations, as with such small figures the law had no chance of showing itself. That was bound to alter as the capitalist method of production created the modern states, which were not, like the earlier ones, simple groups of communes or parishes and provinces, but unitary bodies with important economic functions.

Besides that, however, the capitalist method of production developed not simply the inner market but, in addition, created the world market. This produced highly complicated connections which could not be controlled without the means of statistics. Founded for the practical purpose of tax-gathering and raising of recruits, for customs, and finally for the insurance societies, it gradually embraced wider and wider spheres, and produced a mass of observations on a large scale, revealing laws which were bound to impress themselves on observant workers-up of the material. In England they had already, towards the end of the seventeenth century, since Petty, arrived at a political arithmetic, in which, however, "estimates" played a very big rôle. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the method of statistical inquiries was so complete and its sphere so varied that it was possible to discover with the greatest certainty the laws governing the actions of great masses of men. The Belgian Guelelet made an attempt, in the thirties, to describe in this manner the physiology of human society.

It was seen that the determining element in the alterations of human action was always a material, as a

rule, an economic change. Thus was the decrease and increase of crime, of suicide, and of marriages shown to be dependent on the price of corn.

Not as if, for instance, economic motives were the sole cause that marriages were made at all. Nobody would declare the sexual passion to be an economic motive. But the alteration in the annual number of marriages is called forth by changes in the economic situation.

Besides all these new sciences, there is finally to be mentioned a change in the character of the modern writing of history. The French Revolution came to the fore so clearly as a class struggle, that not only its historian must recognise that, but a number of the historians were inspired to investigate in other periods of history the rôle of the class wars, and to see in them the motive forces of human development. The classes are, however, again a product of the economic structure of society, and from this spring the antagonisms, therefore the struggles of the classes. What holds every class together, what divides them from other classes, and determines their opposition to these, are the particular class interests, a new kind of interests, of which no moralist of the eighteenth century, whatever school he might belong to, had had any idea.

With all these advances and discoveries, which certainly often enough were only piecemeal and by no means quite clear by the time of the forties in the nineteenth century, all the essential elements of the Materialist Conception of History had been supplied. They only waited for the master who should bring them under control and unify them. That was done by Engels and Marx.

Only to deep thinkers such as they were was an achievement of that nature possible. In so far that was their personal work. But no Engels, no Marx could have achieved it in the eighteenth century, before all the new sciences had produced a sufficient mass of new results. On the other hand, a man of the genius of a Kant or a Helvetius could also have discovered the Materialist Conception of History if at their time

the requisite scientific conditions had been to hand. And on the other hand, even Engels and Marx, despite their genius, and despite the preparatory work which the new sciences had achieved, would not have been able, even in the time of the forties in the nineteenth century, to discover it, if they had not stood on the standpoint of the proletariat, and were thus Socialists. That also was absolutely necessary to the discovery of this Conception of History. In this sense it is a proletarian philosophy, and the opposing views are bourgeois philosophies.

The rise of the idea of evolution took place during a period of reaction, when no immediate further development of society was in question. The conception, consequently, only served for the explanation of the previous development, and thereby only in a certain sense —that of a justification ; nay, at times, more a glorification of the past. Just as through Romanticism and the historical school of jurisprudence there goes through the entire study of early times, even through Sanskrit study—I may point to the example of Schopenhauer's Buddhism—in the first decades of the last century, a reactionary trait. So was it with that philosophy which made the evolutionary idea of that period the centre of its system—the Hegelian. Even that was only intended to be a panegyric on the previous development, which had now found its close in the monarchy by the will of God. As reactionary philosophy, this philosophy of the development was bound to be an idealist philosohpy, since the present, the reality, was in too great a contradiction with its reactionary tendencies.

As soon as reality—that is, the capitalist society—had got so far as to be able to make itself felt in face of these tendencies, the idealist conception of evolution became impossible. It was superseded by a more or less open Materialism. But only from the proletariat point of view was it possible to translate the social development into a Materialistic one—in other words, to recognise in the present an evolution of society proceeding according to natural laws. The bourgeoisie

was obliged to close its eyes to all idea of a further social evolution, and repudiate every philosophy of evolution, which did not simply investigate the development of the past to understand this, and also in order to understand the tendencies of the new society of the future, and to hammer out weapons for the struggle of the present, which is destined to bring about this form of society of the future.

Although this period of intellectual reaction after the great Revolution had been overcome, and the bourgeoisie, which had regained self-respect and power, had made an end to all artistic and philosophic romanticism in order to proclaim Materialism, they could not, all the same, get as far as the historic Materialism. Deeply founded as this was in the circumstances of the time, it was no less in the nature of the circumstances that this (the latest form of materialism) could only be a philosophy of the proletariat ; that it should be repudiated by science so far as this came under the influence of the bourgeoisie, repudiated to such an extent that even the Socialist author of "The History of Materialism," Albert Lange, only mentions Karl Marx in that work as an economist, and not as a philosopher.

The idea of evolution, generally accepted for the material sciences, even fruitful for certain special branches of mental science, has remained a dead letter for the scientific point of view, as interpreted by the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie could not even get farther than Hegel in their philosophy. They fell back into a Materialism which stands considerably below that of the eighteenth century, because it is purely natural philosophy and has no theory of society to show. And when this narrow Materialism no longer suited them they turned to the old Kantianism, purified from the defects which had been superseded by science in the meantime, but not emancipated from its Ethic, which was now the bulwark which was to be brought against the Materialist theory of Social Evolution.

In the economic sciences the bourgeoisie hovered between an historic conception, which certainly acknowledges an evolution of society but denies necessary

laws of this development, and a view which recognises necessary laws of society but denies the social development, and believes it possible to discover in the psychology of primitive man all the economic categories of modern society. To these conceptions there was added naturalism (or scientific naturalism) which tries to reduce the laws of society to laws of biology—that is, to the laws of animal and plant organisms—and really amounts to nothing short of a denial of social development.

Since the bourgeoisie has grown conservative, only from the proletarian standpoint is a Materialist view of social development possible.

It is true that the dialectical materialism is a materialism of its own kind, which is quite different from the materialism of natural science (naturalism). Many friends have wished, accordingly, in order to avoid misunderstandings, to substitute another word for the word Materialism.

But if Marx and Engels retained the word Materialism, it was on the same ground as the refusal to re-christen their manifesto of the Communists as the manifesto of the Socialists. The word Socialism covers to-day such various wares, among them some really worthless, Christian and national Socialisms of all kinds; the word Communism, on the other hand, describes unmistakably and clearly the aims of a proletariat fighting a revolutionary fight for its emancipation.

So, also, by a designation of the dialectical materialism as dialectical "monism," or "criticism," or "realism," the entire sense of opposition to the bourgeois world is lost. The word "Materialism," on the other hand, has signified since the victory of Christianity a philosophy of the fight against the ruling powers. Therefore, has it come into disrepute with the bourgeoisie, but for that very reason we followers of the proletarian philosophy have the right to hold fast to this very name, which also can be justified in fact. And a conception of Ethics which rises from this philosophy can rank as a Materialistic one.

## 2.—*The Organisation of Human Society.*

### *(a) The Technical Development.*

If we regard man, from the standpoint of the Materialist Conception of History, at the stage at which we left him in the last chapter—at the boundary which divided him from the rest of the animal world—what is it that raises him above it? Does there exist between him and them only gradual differences, or is there also an essential difference? Neither as thinking nor as moral being is man essentially different from the animals. Does not the difference perhaps lie in the fact that he *produces*—that is, adapts material found in nature by means of change of form or of place to his purposes? This activity is, however, also found in the animal world. To leave out of account many insects, such as bees and ants, we find among many warm-blooded animals, even among many fishes, species of productive activity, namely, the production of refuges and dwellings, nests, underground buildings, and so on. And however much of this productive activity is also the product and result of inherited instincts and dispositions, they are often so suitably adapted to various circumstances that consciousness, the knowledge of causal connections, must also play a part thereby.

Or is it the use of tools which raises man above the animals? Also not that. Among animals we find at least the beginnings of the application of tools, of branches of trees for defence, of stones for cracking nuts, and so on. Their intelligence, as well as the development of the feet into hands, enables the apes to do that.

Thus neither the production of means of consumption nor the use of tools distinguishes man from the animals. What, however, alone distinguishes him is the production of tools, which serve for production and defence or attack. The animal can at the most find the tool in nature; it is not capable of inventing such. It may produce things for its immediate use, prepare dwellings, collect provisions, but it does

not think so far as to produce things which will not serve for direct consumption, but for the production of the means of consumption.

With the production of the means of production, the animal man begins to become the human man; with that he breaks away from the animal world to found his own empire, an empire with its own kind of development, which is wholly unknown to the rest of nature, in which nothing similar is to be found.

So long as the animal only produces with the organs provided by nature, or only uses tools which nature gives him, it cannot rise above the means thus provided for him by nature. Its development only proceeds in the manner that its own organism develops itself; the organs alter themselves, the brain included—a slow and unconscious process carried on by means of the struggle for life, which the animal can in no way hurry on by its conscious activity.

On the other hand the discovery and production of the tool—the word employed in the widest sense—means that man consciously and purposely gives himself new organs, or strengthens or lengthens his natural organs, so that he can still better or easier produce the same that these organs produced; but besides that he is in a position to arrive at results which were formerly quite unattainable by him. But as man is not simply an animal endowed with higher intelligence and hands—the necessary assumption of the application and production of tools—but also must have been, from the very beginning, a social animal, the discovery and production of a tool did not get lost with the death of the specially-gifted individual who had found it—a Marx or Kant or Aristotle inhabiting the trees of the primitive tropical forests. His herd took up the invention and carried it on, won with it an advantage in the struggle for life, so that their descendants could flourish better than the other members of their kind. But the further perspicacity which this fostered in the herd served the purpose for the future of rendering the discovery so complete as to further the invention of fresh tools.

Even if a certain degree of intelligence and the development of the hand forms the necessary condition for the discovery and production of tools, yet it was the social character of man which offered the conditions for the continual addition of new and the improvement of old discoveries, thus for a continual development of the technique. The slow and unconscious process of the development of the individuals through the struggle for life, as it ruled the entire remaining organic world, gives way more and more in the human world in favour of the conscious transformation, adaptation and improvement of the organs ; a development which in its beginning, measured by modern standards, is even then very long and difficult to observe, but which, all the same, goes much quicker than the natural selection. The technical progress forms for the future the foundation of the entire development of man. On that and not on any special divine spark rests all by which man is distinguished from the animals.

Every single step forward on this path of technical development is a conscious and intentional one. Each arises from the endeavour to increase the powers of man over the limits set by nature. But each of these technical advances brings also, of necessity, effects with it, which were not intended by its authors, and could not be, because they were not in a position even to suspect them—effects which, just as much as natural selection, could be called adaptation to the surroundings ; surroundings, however, which men had artificially modified. In these adaptations there plays, however, consciousness, the knowledge of the new surroundings and its requirements ; again, a rôle ; this, nevertheless, is not that of an independent directing force.

### *(b) Technic and Method of Life.*

Let us seek, in order to get a clearer idea of what has been said, to give ourselves an idea what consequences it was bound to have when primitive man arrived at the first tool ; where he joined the stone and the stick, which the age had already used, to make a hammer, an axe or a spear. Naturally, the description

which here follows can only be a hypothetical one, as we have no witness of the whole process; but it is not to serve as a proof, only as an illustration. We make it as simple as possible, disregarding, for example, the influence which fishing could have had on primitive man.

So soon as primitive man possessed the spear he found himself in a position to hunt still bigger animals. His food was, up to then, derived principally from fruits and insects, as well as, probably, little birds and young birds; now he could kill even bigger animals; meat became, henceforth, more important for his food. The majority of the bigger animals, however, live on the earth, not in the trees; hunting thus drew him from his airy regions down to the earth. And further, the animals most chaseable, the ruminants, were but seldom to be found in the primitive forest. The more man became a hunter the more could he emerge from the forest in which primitive man was bred.

This account, as I have said, is purely hypothetical. The process of evolution may have been the reverse. Equally as the discovery of the tool and the weapon may have driven man out of the primitive forest to come forth into open grass land where the trees were farther apart, just as much might forces which drove primitive man from his original abode have been the spur to the discovery of weapons and tools. Let us assume, for instance, that the number of men increased beyond their means of subsistence; or that a glacial period, say the glacier of the central Asiatic mountain range sunk low down, and forced the inhabitants from their forests into the grass plains which bordered it; or that an increasing dryness of the climate even more and more cleared the forest, and caused more and more grass land to come up in it. In all these cases primitive man would have been obliged to give up his tree life, and to move about on the earth; he was obliged from now on to seek for animal food, and could no longer in the same degree feed himself from tree fruits. The new method of life induced him to the frequent

employment of stones and sticks, and brought him nearer to the discovery of the first tools and weapons.

Whatever development we accept, the first or the second—and both could have taken place independent of each other at different points—from both of them we see clearly the close connection which exists between new means of production, new methods of life and new needs. Each of these factors necessarily produces the other; each becomes necessarily the cause of changes, which in their turn hide fresh changes in their bosom. Thus every discovery produces inevitable changes, which give rise to other discoveries, and therewith bring new needs and methods of life, which again call forth new discoveries, and so on—a chain of endless development which becomes so much more rapid and more complicated the farther it proceeds and the more the possibility and facility of new discoveries advance.

Let us consider the consequences which the rise of hunting, as a source of food for man, and his emergence from the primitive forest was bound to draw with it.

Besides the meat man took, in place of the tree fruits, roots and fruits of the grasses, corn and maize into his bill of fare. In the primitive forest a cultivation of plants is impossible, and to clear the primitive forest is beyond the power of primitive man. The latter, however, could not even have evolved this idea. He lived from tree fruits; to plant fruit trees which would first bear fruit after many years assumes that already a high degree of culture and settlement has been attained. On the other hand, the planting of grasses in meadows and steppes is much easier than in the primitive forest, and can be brought about with much simpler tools. The thought of planting grasses, which often bear fruits after only a few weeks, is, moreover, easier to conceive than that of planting trees. Cause and effect are so nearly connected in this case that their dependence is easier to see, and even the unsettled primitive man might expect to exist during the period

between seed time and harvest in the neighbourhood of the cultivated ground.

Again, man so soon as he left the primitive forest was far more at the mercy of climatic changes than in his primitive home. In the thick forest the changes of temperature between day and night were much less than on the open plain, on which during the day a burning sun rules, and by night a powerful radiation and loss of heat. Storms are also less noticeable in the forest than in a woodless territory, and against rain and hail this latter offers much less protection than the almost impenetrable foliage of the first. Thus man forced on to the plains was bound to feel a need for shelter and clothing which the primitive man in the tropical forest never felt. If the male apes had already built themselves formal nests for the night's repose he was bound to go farther and build walls and roofs for protection, or to seek shelter in caves or holes. On the other hand, it was no great step to clothe himself in the skins of animals which remained over after the flesh had been taken out of them. It was certainly the need for protection against cold which caused mankind to aspire for the possession of fire. Its technical utility he could only gradually learn after he had used it a long time. The warmth which it gave out was, naturally, at once evident. How man came to the use of fire will, perhaps, never be certainly known; but it is certain that man in the primitive forest had no need for it as a source of heat, and would not have been able amid the continual damp to maintain it. Only in a drier region, where greater quantities of dry fire materials were to be found at intervals—moss, leaves, brushwood—could fires arise, which made man acquainted with fire; perhaps through lightning, or more likely from the sparks of a flint, the first tool of primitive man, or from the heat which arose from boring holes in hard wood.

We see how the entire life of man, his needs, his dwelling, his means of sustenance were changed; how one discovery brought numerous others in its train so soon as it was once made, so soon as the making

of a spear or an axe had been achieved. In all these transformations consciousness played a great part, but the consciousness of other generations than those which had discovered the spear or the axe. And the tasks which were presented to the consciousness of the later generation were not set by that of the former; they arose by necessity, and spontaneously as soon as the discovery was made.

But with the change of dwelling, of the need of the winning of sustenance, of the entire method of life, the effects of the discovery are not exhausted.

### *(c) Animal and Social Organism.*

The division of labour among the organs in the animal organisation has certain limits, since they are hide-bound to the animal organism, cannot be changed at pleasure, and their number is limited. There is also a limit set for the variety of the functions which an animal organism is capable of performing. It is, for instance, impossible that the same limb should serve equally well for holding things, for running and flying, not to speak of other specialisations.

The tool, on the other hand, can be changed by man. He can adapt it to a single definite purpose. This fulfilled, he puts it on one side; it does not hinder him in other work for which he requires quite other tools. If the number of his limbs are limited, his tools are innumerable.

But not simply the number of the organs of the animal organism is limited, but also the force by which any of them can be moved. It can be in no case greater than the strength of the individual himself to whom they belong; it must always be less, since it has to nourish all its organs besides the one in motion. On the other hand, the force which moves a tool is by no means confined to one individual. So soon as it is separated from the human individual many individuals can unite to move it, nay, they can use other than human forces for the purpose—beasts of burden, and again, water, wind or steam.

Thus in contrast to the animal organism the development of the artificial organs of man is unlimited, at least, as measured by human ideas. They find their limit only in the mass of the moving forces which Sun and Earth place at the disposal of man.

The separation of the artificial organs of man from his personality has, however, still other effects. If the whole organs of the animal organism are bound up with it, that means that every individual has the same organs at his disposal. The sole exception is formed by the organs of reproduction. Only in this region is a division of labour to be found among the higher organisms. Every other division of labour in the animal organism rests on the simple fact that certain individuals take over certain functions for a certain period—for example, the sentry duty, as leaders, etc.—without requiring for the purpose organs which are different from those of other individuals.

The discovery of the tool, on the other hand, made it possible that in a society certain individuals should exclusively use certain tools, or, so much oftener in proportion as they understand their uses better than any one else. Thus we come to a form of division of labour in human society which is of quite another kind from the modest beginnings of such in the animal societies. In the latter there remains, with all the division of labour, a being by itself, which possesses all the organs which it requires for its support. In human society this is less the case the further the division of labour advances in it. The more developed is this latter, so much the greater the number of the organs which society has at its disposal for the gaining of their sustenance and the maintenance of their method of life, but so much the greater, also, the number of the organs which are required, and so much the more dependent the organs over which the individual has command. So much the greater the power of society over nature, but so much the more helpless the individual outside of society, so much the more dependent upon it. The animal society which arose as a natural growth can never raise its members above

nature. On the other hand, human society forms for the human individual a nature which is a quite peculiar world and apart from the rest ; a world which apparently interferes with its being much more than nature, with which latter it imagines itself the better able to cope the more the division of labour increases.

And the latter is practically just as unlimited as the possible progress of technique itself ; it finds its limits only in the limits to the expansion of the human race.

If we said above that the animal society is an organism of a peculiar kind, different from the plant and animal, so we now find that human society forms a peculiar organism, not only differing again from the plant and animal individual, but is essentially different from that composed of animals.

Before all there come two distinguishing features into account. We have seen that the animal organism itself possesses all the organs which it requires for its own existence, while the human individual under the advanced division of labour cannot live by itself without society. The Robinson Crusoes who without any means produce everything for themselves are only to be found in children's story books and the so-called scientific works of bourgeois economists, who believe that the best way to discover the laws of society is to completely ignore them. Man is in his whole nature dependent on society ; it rules him ; only through the peculiar nature of this is he to be understood.

The peculiar nature of society is, however, in a continual state of change, because human society, in distinction to the animal one, is always subject to development in consequence of the technical advance. Animal society develops itself, probably, only in the same degree as the animal species which forms it. Far faster does the process of development proceed in human society. But at the same time nothing can be more erroneous than to conceive it as the same as the development of the individual, and distinguish the stages of youth, of maturity, of decay and death in it. So long as the sources of force hold out over which the earth has command, therefore so long as the foundation

of technical progress does not disappear, we have no decay and death of human society to expect. This, with the development of technique, must ever more and more advance, and is in this sense immortal.

Every society is modelled by the technical apparatus at its command and the people who set it going, for which purpose they enter into the complicated social relations. So long as this technical apparatus keeps on improving, and the people who move it neither diminish in number nor in mental nor physical strength, there can be no talk of a dying out of society.

That state of things has never occurred as a permanent condition in any society as yet. Temporarily, certainly, it occurs, in consequence of peculiarities with which we will make acquaintance later on, that the social relations which sprang from social needs, get petrified and hinder the technical apparatus and the growth of the members of society in number and in intellectual and physical force, nay even give rise to a reactionary movement. That can, however, historically speaking, never last long; sooner or later these fetters of society are burst, either by internal movements, revolutions, or—and that is oftener the case—by impulse from without, by wars. Again, society changes from time to time a part of its members, its boundaries or its names, and it looks to the observer as if the society had shown traces of old age, and was now dead. In reality, however, if we want to take a simile from the animal organism, it has only been suffering from a disease from which it has emerged with renewed strength. Thus, for instance, the society of the Roman Imperial times did not die, but, rejuvenated through German blood, it began, after the migrations of the peoples, with partially new people to improve and build up their technical apparatus.

## 3.—The Changes in the Strength of the Social Instincts.

### *(a) Language.*

Human society, in contrast to those of animals, is continually changing, and for that very reason the people in it must continually be doing the same. The alteration in the conditions of life must react on the nature of man; the division of labour necessarily develops some of his natural organs in a greater degree, and transforms many. Thus, for instance, the development of the human ape from a fruit tree eater into a devourer of animals and plants which are to be found on the ground, was bound to be connected with a transformation of the hind pair of hands into feet. On the other hand, since the discovery of the tool, no animal has been subjected to such manifold and rapid changes in his surroundings as man, and no animal confronted with such tremendous and increasing problems of adaptation to his environment as he, and hence none had to use its intellect to the same degree as he. Already at the beginning of that career, which was opened up by the discovery of the first tool, superior to the rest of the animals by reason of his adaptability and his intellectual powers, he was forced in the course of his history to develop both qualities in the highest degree.

If the changes in society are able to transform the organism of man, his hands, his feet, his brain, how much the more, and how much greater, to change his consciousness, his views of that which was useful and harmful, good and bad, possible and impossible.

If man begins his rise above the animals with the discovery of the tool, he has no need to first create a social compact as was believed in the eighteenth century, and, as many theoretical jurists still believe, in the twentieth. He enters on his human development as a social animal with strong social impulses. The first ethical result of them on society could only be to influence the force of these impulses. According to the character of society these impulses will be either strengthened or weakened. There is nothing more

false than the idea that the social impulses are bound to be continually strengthened as society develops.

At the beginning of human society that certainly will be found true. The impulses, which in the animal world had already developed the social impulses, human society permits to remain in full strength; it adds further to that—co-operation in work. This co-operation itself must have made a new instrument of intercourse, of social understanding, necessary—language. The social animals could correspond with few means of mutual understanding, cries of persuasion, joy, fright, alarm, anger and sensational noises. Every individual is with them a whole, which can exist for itself alone. But sensational noises do not, however, suffice if there is to be common labour, or if different tasks are to be allotted, or different products divided. They do not suffice for individuals who are helpless without the help of other individuals. Division of labour is impossible without a language which describes not merely sensations, but also things and processes. It can only develop in the degree to which language is perfected, and this, for its part, brings with it the need for the former.

In language itself the description of activities, and especially the human, is the most primitive; that of things, the later. The verbs are older than the nouns, the former forming the roots from which these latter are derived.

Thus declares Lazarus Geiger:—

"When we ask ourselves why light and colour were not nameable objects in the first stage of language, but the painting of the colours, the answer lies in this: that man first described only his own actions or those of his kind; he noticed only what happened to himself or in the immediate and, to him, directly interesting neighbourhood, at a period when he had for such things as light and dark, shining objects, and lightning no sense and no power of conception. If we take as examples from the great number which we have already passed under review (in the book); they go back in their beginnings to an extremely limited circle of human

movements. For this reason the conception of natural objects evolve in such a remarkably roundabout manner from the conception of some human activity, which in one way or other called attention to them, and often brings something that is only a distant approximation to them. So the tree is something stripped of its bark, the earth something ground, the corn which grows on it something without the husk. Thus earth and sea, nay, even the clouds, the heavens themselves, emerge from the same root concept of something ground ("Der Ursprung der Sprache," pp. 151-3).

This course of the development of language is not astonishing if we grasp the fact that the first duty of language was the mutual understanding of men in common activities and common movements. This rôle of language as a help in the process of production makes it clear why language had originally so few descriptions of colour. Gladstone and others have concluded from that that the Homeric Greeks and other primitive peoples could only distinguish few colours. Nothing would be more fallacious. Experiments have shown that barbarian peoples have a very highly developed sense of colour. But their colour technic is only slightly developed, the number of colours which they can produce is small, and thence the number of their descriptions of colour is small.

"When man gets so far as to apply a colouring material then the name of this colouring material easily takes on an adjectival character for him. In this way arises the first names of colours." (Grant Allen, "The Colour Sum," p. 254.)

Grant Allen points to the fact that even to-day the names of colours increase as the technique of colour grows. The names of the colours serve first the purpose of technic and not that of describing nature.

The development of language is not to be understood without the development of the method of production. From this latter it depends whether a language is to remain the dialect of a tiny tribe or become a world language, spoken by a hundred million men.

With the development of language a very powerful means of social cohesion is gained, an enormous strengthening and a clear consciousness of the social impetus. But at the same time it certainly produced quite other effects; it is the most effectual means of retaining acquired knowledge, of spreading it, and handing it on to later generations; it first makes it possible to form concepts, to think scientifically, and thus it starts the development of science, and with that brings about the conquest of nature by science.

Now man acquires a mastery over Nature and also an apparent independence of her external influences which arouse in him the idea of freedom. On this I must be allowed a short deviation.

Schopenhauer very rightly says: "The animal has only visual presentations, and consequently only motives which it can visualise: the dependence of its acts of will on the motives is thus clear. In man this is no less the case, and men are impelled (always taking the individual character into account) by the motives with the strictest necessity: only these are not for the most part visual but abstract presentations, that is, conceptions, thoughts which are nevertheless the result of previous views, thus of impressions from without. That gives to man a certain freedom in comparison with the animals. Because he is not, like the animal, determined by the visual surroundings present before him but by his thoughts drawn from previous experiences or transmitted to him through teaching. Hence the motive which necessarily moves him is not at once clear to the observer when the deed happens; but it remains concealed within his mind. That gives not only to his actions taken as a whole, but to all his movements, an obviously different character from those of the animal: he is at the same time drawn by finer invisible wires. Thus all his movements bear the impress of being guided by principles and intentions, which gives them the appearance of independence, and obviously distinguishes them from those of the animal. All these great distinctions depend, however, entirely on the capacity

for abstract presentations—conceptions." ("Preisschrift ueber die Grundlage der Moral," 1860, p. 148.)

The capacity for abstract presentations depends again on language. Probably it was a deficiency in language which caused the first concept to be formed. In Nature there are only single things; language is, however, too poor to be able to describe every single thing. Man must consequently describe all things which are similar to each other with the same word; but with this he undertakes unconsciously a scientific work, the collection of the similar, the separation of the unlike. Language is then not simply an organ of mutual understanding of different men with each other, but has become an organ of thought. Even when we do not speak to others, but think to ourselves only, the thoughts must be clothed in certain words.

Does language, however, give to man a certain freedom in contrast to the animals, this, all the same, only develops on a higher plane what the formation of the brain had already begun.

In the lower animals the nerves of motion are directly connected with the nerves of sensation; here every external impression at once releases a movement. Gradually, however, there developes a bundle of nerves to a central point of the entire nervous system, which receives all the impressions and is not obliged to transmit all to the motor nerves, but can store them up and work them off. The higher animal gathers experiences which it can utilise, and impulses which even under certain circumstances it can hand on to its descendants.

Thus through the medium of the brain the connection between the external impression and the movement is obscured. Through the language, which renders possible the communication of ideas to others, as well as abstract conceptions, scientific knowledge, and convictions, the connection between sensation and movement becomes in many cases completely unrecognisable.

A very similar thing happens in Economics. The most primitive form of the circulation of wares is that of

barter of commodities, of products which serve the personal or productive consumption. Here from both sides an article of consumption is given and received. The object of the exchange is clear.

That alters with the rise of an element to facilitate circulation—money. Now it is easy to sell without at once buying, just as the brain makes it possible that impressions should work on the organism without at once releasing a movement. As this renders possible a storing up of experiences and impulses, which can even be transmitted to descendants, so notoriously can a treasury be collected from gold. And as the collection of that treasury of experiences and impulses under the necessary social conditions finally renders possible the development of science and the conquest of nature by science, so does the collection of money treasure render possible, when certain social conditions are also there, the transformation of money into capital, which raises the productivity of human labour to the highest degree and revolutionises the world within a few centuries to a greater degree than formerly occurred in hundreds of thousands of years.

And so just as there are philosophers who believe that the elements, brain and language, intellectual powers and ideas which form the connection between sensation and movement are not simply means to arrange this connection more conveniently for the individual and society, and thus apparently to increase their strength, but that they are of themselves sprung from independent sources of power, starting even from the Creator of the world: so there are economists who imagine that money brings about the circulation of goods, and that as capital renders it possible to develop human production enormously, it is this which is the author of this circulation, the creator of these forces, the producer of all values which are produced over and above the product of the primitive handwork.

The theory of the productivity of capital rests on a process of thought which is very similar to that of the freedom of the will and the assumption of a moral

law, independent of time and space, which regulates our action in time and space.

It was just as logical when Marx combated the one process of thought as the other.

### *(b) War and Property.*

A further means besides community in work and language to strengthen the social impulses is formed by the social development through the rise of war.

We have no reason to suppose that primitive man was a warlike being. Herds of ape-men who gathered together in the branches of trees with copious sources of food may have squabbled and driven each other away. That this got so far as killing their opponents, there is no example among the living apes of to-day. Of male gorillas it is reported that they occasionally fight each other with such fury that one kills the other, but that is a fight for a wife not a fight for feeding grounds.

That changes so soon as man becomes a hunter, who has command of tools which are directed to killing, and who has grown accustomed to killing, to the shedding of strange blood. Also another factor comes into account, which Engels has already pointed out, to explain the cannibalism which often comes up at this period: the uncertainty of the sources of food. Vegetable food is in the tropical forests in abundance; on the grass plains, on the other hand, roots and fruits are not always to be found, the capture of game is, moreover, for the most part a matter of chance. The beasts of prey have thus acquired the capacity of being able to fast for incredibly long periods. The human stomach has not such powers of endurance. Thus necessity easily forces a tribe of savages to a fight for life or death with another neighbouring tribe, which has got a good hunting territory; then the passions aroused by the fight and agonising hunger finally drive them not simply to kill the foe but also to eat him.

In this way technical progress lets loose struggles which the ape-man did not know; fights not with animals of other kinds but with the members of his

own kind themselves: struggles, often more bloody than those with the leopard and the panther, which at least the bigger apes understand very well how to defend themselves against when united in greater numbers.

Nothing is more fallacious than the idea that the progress of culture and increase of knowledge necessarily bring also higher humanity with them. We could far better say, the ape is more human, therefore more human than man. Murder and slaughter of members of his species from economic notions are products of culture of technic in arms. And up to now the perfection of these has ranked as a great part of the intellectual labour of mankind.

Only under special circumstances and in special classes will there be produced in the farther progress of culture what we call the refinement of manners. The progress in division of labour ascribes the task of killing animals and men to certain classes—hunters, butchers, executioners, soldiers, etc.—who then occupy themselves with brutality or cruelty either as a sport or as a business within the boundaries of civilisation. Other classes are entirely relieved of the necessity, nay, even the possibility of shedding blood. As, for instance, the vegetarian peasants in the river valleys of India, who are prevented by nature from keeping great herds of animals, and for whom the ox is too costly as a beast of burden, or the cow as the giver of milk, for them to be in a position to kill them. Even the majority of the town inhabitants of the European States, since the decay of the town republics and the rise of paid armies as well as the rise of a special class of butchers, are relieved of the necessity to take life. Especially the intellectuals have been for centuries unused to the spilling of blood, which they ascribe to their higher intelligence, which roused milder feelings in them. But in the last century the increased military service has become again a general institution of most European States, and wars have again become the wars of peoples, and with that the refinement of manners among our intellectuals has reached its end.

They have become since then considerably more brutal; the death penalty, which even in the last fifty years of last century was generally condemned, meets with no opposition any longer, and the cruelties of colonial wars, which fifty years ago, at least in Germany, would have made their authors impossible, are excused to-day—even glorified.

In any case, war among modern peoples ceases to play the rôle it did among the nomadic pastoral and hunting tribes. But if it produces cruelty and blood-thirstiness on the one hand, it shows itself on the other as a powerful weapon to strengthen the bonds within the family or society. The greater the dangers which threaten the individual, so much the more dependent does he feel himself upon his society, his family, his class, who alone with their joint forces can protect him. So much the greater the respect enjoyed by the virtues of unselfishness or a bravery which will risk life for the society. The more bloody the wars between tribe and tribe, the more will the system of selection have effect among them; those tribes will assert themselves best who have not only the strongest but also the cleverest, the bravest, the most self-sacrificing and best disciplined members to show. Thus war works in primitive times in the most various manners to strengthen the social instincts in men.

War, however, in the course of the social evolution alters its forms; also its causes change.

Its first cause, the uncertainty of the sources of food, ceases as soon as agriculture and the breeding of animals are more developed. But then begins a new cause of war: the possession of wealth. Not private property, but the tribal property. Side by side with tribes in fruitful regions we find others in unfruitful ones; adjoining nomadic, water-searching and poor shepherds, settled peasants to whom water had no longer value, whose farming produced plentiful surpluses, etc. War now becomes robbery and defence against robbery, and it has remained in essence the same till to-day.

Even this kind of war has a strengthening effect on the social instincts so long as the property in the tribe is in the main communal. On the other hand, war seems to strengthen the social instincts the more classes are formed in the community, and becomes more and more a simple affair of the ruling classes, whose endeavours are aimed towards an increase in their sphere of exploitation, or to put themselves in the place of another ruling class on a neighbouring land. For the subject classes in such wars it is often enough not a question of their existence, and, occasionally, not even a question of a better or worse standard of life for them, but only who is to be their lord. The army becomes either an aristocratic army, in which the mass of the people have no part, or when they co-operate it becomes a paid or compulsory army, which is commanded by the ruling classes, and they must put their lives at stake not for their own property, their own wives and children, but to champion the interests of others, often hostile interests. The bond which holds such armies together is no longer that of social interests, but solely fright of a remorselessly cruel penal code. They are divided by the hate of the mass against the leaders, by the indifference, even the mistrust of the latter against their subordinates.

At this stage war ceases to be for the mass of the people a school of social feelings. In the ruling, warrior classes it becomes a school of haughty, overbearing demeanour towards the governed classes, because it teaches the ruling classes to treat the former just as they do the common soldiers in the army, to degrade them to blind subordination to an absolute commander, and to dispose of their forces, nay, even their lives, without any scruples.

This development of war is, as we have already said, a consequence of the development of property, which again arises from the technical development.

Every object which is produced in society, or by means of which production is carried on in it, must be at the disposal of someone, and either a group or a

single individual can dispose of it, or the entire society. The nature of this disposal is determined in the first place by the nature of the things, the nature of the method of production, and that of the producer, who made and used his weapons himself, just as he prepared himself a garment or an ornament; while on the other hand, it was equally natural that the house which was built by the common labour of the tribe should be inhabited in common by them. The various kinds of enjoyment of the various things for utility were always allowed, and, being repeated from generation to generation, became the fixed customs.

Thus arose a law of custom, which was then extended still further in this way, that as often as quarrels arose over this method of use, or about persons who had this right to use, the assembled members of the tribe decided. Law did not arise from any thought-out legislation or social compact, but from a custom resting on the technical conditions, and where these did not suffice, on individual decisions of the society, which decided each case by itself. Thus arose, little by little, a complicated right of property in the various means of production and products of society.

Common property, however, preponderated in the beginning, especially in the means of production—a soil worked in common, water apparatus, houses, also herds of animals and other things besides. Even this small degree of communism was bound to very largely strengthen the social impulses, the interest in the common good, and also increase the subordination to the same and the dependence on the same.

Very differently did the private property of single families or individuals work out, so soon as it arrived at such a pitch that it began to usurp the place of common property. That began when, in consequence of the growing division of labour, the various branches of hand work began to separate themselves from agriculture, in which they had hitherto found a large employment; when they became more and more independent and separated into branches.

This development meant an extension of the sphere of society through the division of labour—an extension of the number of those men who thereby form a society because they work for each other, and thus are materially dependent for their existence on each other. But this extension of the social labour does not develop on the lines of an extension of work in common, but towards a separation of individuals from the common work and to making their work the private work of independent producers, who produce that which they themselves do not consume, and obtain in return the products of other branches to consume them.

Thus at this stage the common production and common property in the means of production of societies, each in the main satisfying its own wants, for example, the mark or at least the home community, was bound to give way before the individual production and property of single individuals, or married couples with children, who produced commodities, not for their own use but for the market.

With that there arose side by side with private property, which had already existed at an earlier period, even if not to so great an extent, an entirely new element in society: the competitive struggle of the different producers of the same kind, who struggle against each other for their share of the market.

War and competition are often regarded as the only forms of the struggle for existence in the entire natural world. In reality, both arise from the technical progress of mankind, and belong to its special peculiarity. Both are distinguished from the struggle for existence of the animal world in that the latter is a struggle of individuals or entire societies against the surrounding nature; a fight against living and inanimate forces of nature in which those best fitted for the particular circumstances can best maintain themselves and reproduce their kind. But it is not a fight for life or death against other individuals of the same kind, with the exception of a few beasts of prey, even with whom the last kind of struggle plays only a secondary part in the struggle for life, with the exception

of the struggle for sexual natural selection. With men alone, thanks to the perfection of their tools, the struggle against individuals of the same kind to maintain themselves in the struggle for life is developed. But even then there is a great distinction between wars and the struggle for existence. The first is a struggle which breaks out between two different societies; it means an interruption of production, and thus can never be a permanent institution. But at the same time it necessitates, at least where no great class antagonisms exist, the strongest social cohesion, and thus encourages in the highest degree the social instincts. Competition, on the other hand, is a struggle between individuals, and indeed between individuals of the same society. This struggle is a regulator—although certainly a most peculiar one—which keeps the social co-operation of the various individuals going, and arranges that in the last resort these private producers shall always produce what is socially necessary, that is, what is under the given social conditions necessary. If war forms an occasional interruption of production, so does the struggle for life form its constant and necessary companion in the production of wares.

Just as war so does competition mean a tremendous waste of force, but it has been at the same time a means by which to extort the highest degree of tension of all the productive forces and their most rapid improvement. It has consequently had a great economic importance, and has created such gigantic productive forces that the framework of commodity production becomes too narrow, as at one time the framework of the primitive social or co-operative production became too narrow for the growing division of labour. But over-production, no less than the artificial limitation of production by employers' associations, shows that the time is past when competition as a spur to production helps on social evolution.

But it has always done even this only because it drove it on to the greatest possible expansion of production. On the other hand, the competitive struggle between individuals of the same society has

under all circumstances an absolutely deadly effect on the social instincts. Since in this struggle each one asserts himself so much the better the less he allows himself to be led by social considerations, the more exclusively he has his own interest in view. For men under a developed system of production of commodities it seems only too clear that egoism is the only natural impulse in man, and that the social impulses are only a refined egoism, or an invention of priests to get mastery over man, or to be regarded as a supernatural mystery. If in the society of to-day the social impulses have kept any strength, it is only due to the circumstance that general commodity production is quite a young phenomenon, hardly 100 years old, and that in the degree in which the primitive democratic communism disappears, and therewith war ceases to be a source of social impulses, a new source of the same breaks forth so much the stronger—the class war of the forward-struggling exploited classes of the people; a war not by paid soldiers, not by conscripts, but by volunteers—not for other people's interests, but fought in the interests of their own class.

### 4.—The Influence of the Social Instincts.

#### *(a) Internationalism.*

The sphere in which the social instincts develop changes at a far quicker rate than the degree of strength of these instincts themselves. The traditional Ethics looked on the moral law as the force which regulates the relations of man to man. Since this view sets out from the individual and not from society, it entirely overlooks the fact that the moral law does not regulate the intercourse of men with every other man, but simply with men of the same society. That it only holds good for these will be comprehensible when we recollect the origin of the social instincts. They are a means to increase the social cohesion, to add to the strength of society. The animal has social instincts only for the members of his own herd, the other herds are more or less indifferent to him. Among

social beasts of prey we find direct hostility to the members of other herds. Thus the pariah dogs of Constantinople in every street look very carefully out that no other dog comes into the district. It would be at once chased away, or even torn to pieces.

At a similar relation do the human herds arrive so soon as hunting and war rise in their midst. One of the most important forms of the struggle for existence is now for them the struggle of the herd against other herds of the same kind. The man who is not a member of the same society becomes a direct enemy. The social impulses not only do not hold good for him but directly oppose him. The stronger they are so much the better does the tribe hold together against the common foe, so much the more energetically do they fight the latter. The social virtues, mutual help, self-sacrifice, love of truth, etc., apply only to fellow-tribesmen, not to the members of another society. It excited much resentment against me when I stated these facts in the "Neue Zeit," and my statement was interpreted as if I had attempted to establish a special Social Democratic principle in opposition to the principles of the eternal moral law, which demands unconditional truthfulness to all men. In reality I have only stated that which has existed as the moral law within our breasts from the time when our forefathers became men, viz., that over against the enemy the social virtues are not required. There is no need, however, on that account that anybody should be especially indignant with the Social-Democracy, because there is no party which interprets the idea of society more widely than they, the party of Internationalism, which draws all nations, all races into the sphere of their solidarity. If the moral law applies only to members of our own society, the extent of the latter is still by no means fixed once for all. Rather does it increase in proportion to the degree in which the division of labour progresses; the productivity of human labour increases as do the means of human intercourse improve. The number of people increase whom a certain territory can support, who are bound to work in a

certain territory for one another and with one another, and who thus are socially bound together. But also the number of the territories increase whose inhabitants live in connection with each other, in order to work for each other and form one social union. Finally, the range of the territories entering into fixed social dependence on each other and forming a permanent social organisation with a common language, common customs, common laws, extends also.

After the death of Alexander of Macedon, the peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean had formed already an international circle, with an international language—Greek. After the rise of the Romans all the lands round the Mediterranean became a still wider international circle, in which the national distinctions disappeared, and who held themselves to be the representatives of humanity.

The new religion of the circle which took the place of the old national religions was, from the very beginning, a world religion with one God, who embraced the entire world, and before whom all men were equal. This religion applied itself to all religions, and declared them all to be children of one God, all workers.

But in fact the moral law held good even here only for the members of their own circle of culture—for "Christians," for "believers." And the centre of gravity in Christianity came ever more and more towards the North and West during the migration of the peoples. In the South and East there formed itself a new circle of culture with its own morality—that of Islam—which forced its way forward in Asia and Africa, as the Christian one had done in Europe.

Now, however, this last expanded itself, thanks to capitalism, ever more and more to a universal civilisation which embraced Buddhists, Moslems, Parsees, Brahmins, as well as Christians, who more and more ceased to be real Christians.

Thus becomes formed a foundation for the final realisation of that moral conception already expressed by Christianity, although too prematurely to be able to be realised itself for the majority of Christians, for

whom it in consequence became a mere phrase; this was the conception of the equality of men, the view that the social instincts, the moral virtues are to be exercised towards all men in equal fashion. The foundation of a general human morality is being formed not by a moral improvement of humanity, whatever we are to understand by that, but by the development of the productive forms of man, by the extension of the social division of human labour, the perfection of the means of intercourse. This new morality is, however, even to-day, far from being a morality of all men, even in the economically progressive countries. It is in essence, even to-day, the morality of the class-conscious proletariat; that part of the proletariat which in its feeling and thinking has emancipated itself from the rest of the people, and has formed its own morality in opposition to that of the bourgeoisie.

Certainly it is capital which creates the material foundation for a general human morality, but it only creates the foundation by treading this morality continually under its feet. The capitalist nations of the circle of European Society spread this by widening their sphere of exploitation, which is only possible by means of force. They thus create the foundations of a future world peace by war; the foundations of the universal solidarity of the nations by a universal exploitation of all nations, and those of the drawing in of all colonial lands into the circle of European culture by the oppression of all colonial lands with the worst and most forcible weapons of a most brutal barbarism. The proletariat alone, who have no share in the capitalist exploitation, fight it, and must fight it, and they will, on the foundation laid down by capital of world intercourse and world commerce, create a form of society, in which the equality of man before the moral law will—instead of a mere pious wish—become reality.

*(b) The Class Division.*

But if the economic development thus tends to widen the circle of society within which the social

impulses and virtues have effect till it embraces finally the whole of humanity, it at the same time creates not only private interests within society which are capable of considerably diminishing the effect of these social impulses for the time, but also special classes of society, which, while within their own narrow circle greatly intensifying the strength of the social instincts and virtues, at the same time, however, can materially injure their value for the other members of the entire society, or at least for the opposing sections or classes.

The formation of classes is also a product of the division of labour. Even the animal is no homogeneous formation. Among them there are already various groups which have a different importance in and for the community. Yet the group formation still rests on the natural distinctions. There are, in the first place, those of sex and of age. Then there are the groups of the children, the youths of both sexes, the adults, and, finally, the aged. The discovery of the tool has at first the effect of emphasising still more the separation of certain of these groups. Thus it came about that hunting and war fell to the men, who were more easily able to get about than the women, who are continually burdened with children. That, and not any inferior power of self-defence, it was, probably, which made hunting and fighting a monopoly of man. Wherever in history and fable we come across female huntresses and warriors, they are always the unmarried. Women do not lack in strength, endurance, or courage, but maternity is not easily to be reconciled with the insecure life of the hunter and warrior. As, however, motherhood drives the women rather to continually stay in one place, those duties fall to her which require a settled life, the planting of field fruits, the maintenance of the family hearth, etc.

According to the importance which hunting and war, or, on the other side, agriculture and domestic life, attain for society, and according to the part which each of the two sexes play in either, the importance and relative respect paid to the man and woman in the social life also changes. But even the import-

ance of the various ages depends on the method of production. Does hunting preponderate, which renders the sources of food very precarious and from time to time necessitates great migrations, the old people become easily a burden to the society. They are often killed, sometimes even eaten. It is different when the people are settled; the breeding of animals and agriculture produce a more plentiful return. Now the old people can remain at home, and there is no lack of food for them. There is, however, at the same time a great sum of experiences and knowledge stored up, whose guardians, so long as writing was not discovered or become the common property of the people, are the old folk. They are the handers down of what might be called the beginning of science. Thus they are not now looked on as a painful burden, but honoured as the bearers of a higher wisdom. Writing and printing deprives the old people of the privilege to incorporate in their persons the sum of all experiences and traditions of the society. The continual revolutionising of all experience, which is the characteristic feature of the modern system of production, makes the old traditions even hostile to the new. The latter counts, without any further ado, as the better: the old as antiquated, and hence bad. The old only receives sympathy; it enjoys no longer any prestige. There is now no higher praise for an old man, than that he is still young and still capable of taking in new ideas.

As with the respect paid to the sexes, so does the respect paid to the various ages alter in society with the various methods of production.

The progressive division of labour carries them further; distinctions appear within each sex, but chiefly among the men. The woman is, in the first place, more and more tied to the household, whose range diminishes instead of growing, as more and more branches of production break away from it, becoming independent and a domain of the men. Technical progress, division of labour, the separation into trades were up till last century almost exclusively restricted to

men; only a few reflections from that affected the household and, consequently, woman's work.

The more this separation into different professions advances, the more complicated does the social organism become, whose organs they form. The nature and method of their co-operation in the fundamental social process, in other words, the method of production, has nothing of chance about it. It is quite independent of the will of the individuals, and is necessarily determined by the given material conditions. Among these the technical factor is again the most important, and whose development causes that of the method of production. But it is not the only one.

Let us take an example. The materialist conception of history has been often understood as if certain technical conditions of themselves meant a certain method of production, nay even certain social and political forms. As that, however, is not exact, since the same tools are to be found in various states of society; therefore, it is argued, the materialist conception of history must be false, and the social relations are not determined by the technical conditions. The objection is right, but it does not hit the materialist conception of history, but its caricature, by a confusion of technical conditions and method of production.

It has been said, for instance, the plough forms the foundation of the peasant economy. But manifold are the social circumstances in which this appears!

Certainly. But let us look a little more closely. What brings about the deviations of the various forms of society which arise on the peasant foundations?

Let us take, for example a peasantry which lives on the banks of a great tropical or sub-tropical river, which periodically floods its banks, bringing either decay or fruitfulness to the soil. Water dams, etc., will be required to keep the water back here, and to guide it there. The single village is not able to carry out such works by itself. A number of them must co-operate, and supply labourers; common officials must be appointed, with a commission to set the labour going for making and maintaining the works. The bigger

the undertaking the more villages must take a part ; the greater the number of the forced labourers the greater the special knowledge required to conduct such works, so much the greater the power and knowledge of the leading officials compared with the rest of the population. Then there grows on the foundation of a peasant economy a priest or official class, as in the river plains of the Nile, the Euphrates, or the Whang-Ho.

Another species of development we find there : where a flourishing peasant economy has setfled in fruitful, accessible lands in the neighbourhood of robbers—nomadic tribes. The necessity of guarding themselves against these nomads forces the peasants to form a force of guards, which can be done in various ways. Either a part of the peasantry applies itself to the trade of arms and separates itself from the others who yield them services in return, or the robber neighbours are induced by payment of a tribute to keep the peace and to protect their new proteges from other robbers, or, finally, the robbers conquer the land and remain as lords over the peasantry, on whom they levy a tribute, for which, however, they provide a protective force. The result is always the same—the rise of a new feudal nobility which rules and exploits the peasants.

Occasionally the first and second methods of development unite, then we have, besides a priest and official class, a warrior caste.

Again, quite differently does the peasantry develop on a sea with good harbours, which favour sea voyages, and bring them closer to other coasts with well-to-do populations. By the side of agriculture, fishing arises ; fishing which soon passes over into war-piracy and sea commerce. At a particularly suitable spot for a harbour is gathered together plunder and merchants' goods, and there is formed a town of rich merchants. Here the peasant finds a market for his goods ; now arise for him money receipts, and also the expenditure of money, money obligations, debts. Soon he is the debtor of the money owners in the town.

Sea piracy and sea commerce, as well as sea war, bring, however, a plentiful supply of slaves into the

country. The town money owners, instead of exploiting their peasant debtors any further, go to work to drive them from their possessions, to unite into great plantations, and to introduce slave work for the peasant, without any change being required in the tools and instruments of agriculture.

Finally, we see a fourth type of peasant development in inaccessible mountain regions. The soil there is poor and difficult to cultivate. By the side of agriculture, the breeding of stock retains the preponderance. Nevertheless, both are not sufficient to sustain a great increase of population. At the foot of the mountains, fruitful, well-tilled lands tempt them. The mountain peasants will make the attempt to conquer and exploit them, or, where they meet with resistance, to hire out their superfluous population as paid soldiers. Their experience in war, in combination with the poverty and inaccessibility of their land, serves to guard it against foreign invaders, to whom in any case its poverty offers no great temptation. There the old peasant democracy still exists, when all around the peasantry have long become dependent on feudal lords, priests, merchants and usurers. Occasionally a primitive democracy of that kind tyrannises and exploits a neighbouring country which they have conquered, in marked contradiction to their own highly-valued liberty. Thus the old cantons of the fatherland of William Tell exercised through their bailiffs in Tessin in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a rule, whose crushing weight could compare with that of the tyrannical Geisler.

It will be seen that very different methods of production are compatible with the peasant economy. How are these differences to be explained? The opponents of the materialist conception of history trace them back to force, or again to the difference of the ideas which form themselves at various periods in the various peoples.

Now it is certain that in the erection of all these methods of production force played a great part, and Marx called it the midwife of every new society. But

whence comes this monopoly of force? How does it come that one section of the people conquers with it, and the other not, and that the force produces this and not other results? To all these questions the force theory has no answer to give. And equally by the theory of ideas does it remain a mystery where the ideas come from which lead to freedom in the mountain country, to priest rule in the river valley land, to money and slave economy on the shores of the sea, and in hilly undulating countries to feudal serfdom.

We have seen that these differences in the development of the same peasant system rest on differences in the natural and social surroundings in which this system is placed. According to the nature of the land, according to the description of its neighbours will the peasant system of economy be the foundation of very different social forms. These special social forms become, then, side by side with the natural factors, further foundations, which give a peculiar form to the development based on them. Thus the Germans found when they burst in on the Roman Empire during the migration of the peoples, the Imperial Government with its bureaucracy, the municipal system, the Christian Church, as social conditions, and these, as well as they could, they incorporated into their system.

All these geographical and historical conditions have to be studied if the particular method of production in a land at a particular time is to be understood. The knowledge of its technical conditions alone does not suffice.

It will be seen that the materialist conception of history is not such a simple formula as its critics usually conceive it to be. The examples here given show us, however, also, how class differences and class antagonisms are produced by the economic development.

Differences not simply between individuals, but also between individual groups within the society, existed already in the animal world, as we have remarked already—distinctions in the strength, the reputation, perhaps even of the material position of individuals and groups. Such distinctions are natural, and will be

hardly likely to disappear even in a Socialist society. The discovery of tools, the division of labour and its consequences—in short, the economic development contributes still further to increase such difference, or even to create new. In any case, they cannot exceed a certain narrow limit, so long as the social labour does not yield a surplus over that necessary to the maintenance of the members of the society. As long as that is not the case, no idlers can be maintained at the cost of society, none can get considerably more in social products than the other. At the same time, however, there arise at this very stage, owing to the increasing enmity of the tribes to each other and the bloody method of settling their differences, as well as through the common labour and the common property, so many new factors through which the social instincts are strengthened that the small jealousies and differences arising between the families, the different degrees of age, or the various callings can just as little bring a split in the community as that between individuals. Despite the beginnings of division of labour which are to be found there, human society was never more closely bound up together, or more in unison than at the time of the primitive Gentile co-operative society, which preceded the beginning of class antagonisms.

Things, however, alter so soon as social labour begins, in consequence of its necessary productivity, to produce a surplus. Now it becomes possible for single individuals and professions to secure for themselves permanently a greater share in the social product than the others can secure. Single individuals, only seldom, temporarily, and as a matter of exception, will be able to achieve that for themselves alone; on the other hand, it is very obvious that any classes specially favoured in any particular manner by the circumstances—for example, such as are conferred by special knowledge or special powers of self-defence, can acquire the strength to permanently appropriate the social surplus for themselves. Property in the products is narrowly bound up with property in the means of production; who possesses the latter can dispose of the

former. The endeavours to monopolise the social surplus by the privileged class produces in it the desire to monopolise and take sole possession of the means of production. The forms of this monopoly can be very diverse, either common ownership of the ruling class or caste, or private property of the individual families or individuals of this class.

In one way or another the mass of the working people become disinherited, degraded to slaves, serfs, wage labourers ; and with the loss of common property in the means of production and their use in common is the strongest bond torn asunder which held primitive society together.

And if the social distinctions which managed to form themselves within primitive society were kept within narrow limits, now the class distinctions, which can form themselves, have practically no limit. They can grow on the one side through the technical progress which increases the surplus of the product of the social labour over the amount necessary to the simple maintenance of society ; on the other hand, through the expansion of the community, while the number of the exploiters remains the same or even decreases, the number of those working and producing surplus for each exploiter grows. In this way the class distinctions can enormously increase, and with them grow the social antagonisms.

In the degree in which this development advances, society grows more and more divided, the class war becomes the principal, most general and continuous form of the struggle of the individuals for life in human society ; in the same degree the social instincts lose strength, but they become so much the stronger within that class whose welfare is on the whole always more and more identical with that of the commonweal.

It is, however, specially the exploited, oppressed, and uprising classes in whom the class war strengthens thus the social instincts and virtues ; and that because they are obliged to put their whole personality into this with much more intensity than the ruling classes, who are often in a position to leave their defence, be it with

the weapons of war, or with the weapons of the intellect, to hirelings. Besides that, however, the ruling classes are often internally deeply divided through the struggles between themselves for the social surplus, and over the means of production. One of the strongest causes of that kind of division we have learned in the battle of competition.

All these factors, which work against the social instincts, find no, or little, soil in the exploited classes. The smaller this soil, the less property that the struggling classes have, the more they are forced back on their own strength, the stronger do their members feel their solidarity against the ruling classes, and the stronger do their own social feelings towards their own class grow.

### 5.—The Tenets of Morality.

#### *(a) Custom and Convention.*

We have seen that the economic development introduces into the moral factors transmitted from the animal world an element of pronounced mutability, in that it gives a varying degree of force to the social instincts and virtues at different times, and also at the same time in different classes; that it, however, in addition, widens, and then again narrows down the scope within which the social impulses have effect; on the one side expanding its influence from the tiny tribe till it embraces the entire humanity, on the other side limiting it to a certain class within the society.

But the same economic development creates in addition a special moral factor, which did not exist at all in the animal world, and is the most changeable of all, since not only its strength, but also its contents are subject to far-reaching change. These are the tenets of morality.

In the animal world we find only strong moral feelings, but no distinct moral precepts which are addressed to the individual. That assumes that a language has been formed, which can describe not only impressions but also things, or at least actions; a language for whose existence in the animal world all

signs fail, for which also a need first arises with the common work. Then is it possible to address distinct demands to the individual. If these demands arise from individual and exceptional needs, then they will again disappear with the individual exceptional case. If on the other hand they have their origin in the social relations, they will recur again and again, so long as these relations last; and in the beginnings of society, where the development is very slow, one can allow hundreds of thousands of years for the endurance of particular social conditions. The social demands on the individual repeat themselves so often and so regularly, that they become a habit, to which the tendency is finally inherited, as the tendency to peculiar kinds of hunting by the sporting dogs, so that certain suggestions suffice to arouse the habit in the descendants as well; also, for instance, the feeling of shame, the habit of covering certain portions of the body whose nude state appears immoral.

Thus arise demands on the individual from society which are more numerous the more complicated is society, and these demands, finally by force of habit, become, without any further ado, recognised as moral commands.

From this customary character many materialist ethical writers have concluded that the entire being of morals rests alone on custom. With that it is, nevertheless, by no means exhausted. In the first place only such views become, through habit, moral commands, which favour the consideration of the individual for the society, and regulate his conduct to other men. It may be brought against this, that there are individual vices which count as immoral, yet their original condemnation was certainly also in the interest of society. Thus, for example, masturbation, if general, must prejudice the chance of securing a numerous progeny—and such a progeny appeared then, when Malthus had not yet spoken, as one of the weightiest foundations of the well-being and progress of society.

In the Bible (Genesis XXXVIII.) Onan was killed by Jehovah because he allowed his spermatozoa to fall to

the ground instead of attending to his duty and having intercourse with the wife of his dead brother, so as to raise up seed for the latter.

The moral rules could only for this reason become customs because they met deep-lying, ever-recurring social needs. Finally, however, a simple custom cannot explain the force of the feeling of duty, which often shows itself more powerful than all the demands of self-preservation. The customary element in morals only has the effect that certain rules are forthwith recognised as moral, but it does not produce the social instincts which compel the performance of demands recognised as moral laws.

Thus, for example, it is a matter of habit that counts it as disreputable when a girl shows herself in her nightgown to a man, even when this garment goes down to the feet, and takes in the neck, while it is no way improper if a girl appears in the evening with a much uncovered bosom at a ball before all the world, or if she, in a watering-place, in a wet bathing-dress exposes herself to the lecherous gaze of men of the world. But only the force of the social instincts can bring it about that a sternly moral girl should at no price submit to that which convention, fashion, custom —in short, society—has once stamped as shamelessness, and that she should occasionally even prefer death itself to that which she regards as shame.

Other moralists have carried the idea of the moral regulations as simple customs still farther, and described them as simple conventional fashions, basing this on the phenomena that every nation, nay each class has its own particular moral conceptions which often stand in absolute contradiction to others, that, consequently, an absolute moral law has no validity. It has been concluded from that that morality is only a changing fashion, which only the thoughtless philistine crowd respect, but which the superman can and must raise himself above as things that appertain to the ordinary throng.

But not only are the social instincts something absolutely not conventional, but something deeply grounded

in human nature—the nature of man as a social animal; even the moral tenets are nothing arbitrary, but arise from social needs.

It is certainly not possible in every case to fix the condition between certain moral conceptions and the social relations from which they arose. The individual takes moral precepts from his social surroundings without being aware of their social causes. The moral law becomes, then, habit to him, and appears to him as an emanation of his own spiritual being, a priori given to him, without any practical root. Only scientific investigation can gradually show up in a series of laws the relations between particular forms of society and particular moral precepts, and then much remains dark. The social forms from which moral principles arose, and which still hold good at a later period, often lie far back, in very primitive times. Besides that, to understand a moral law, not only the social need must be understood which called it forth, but also the peculiar thought of the society which created it. Every method of production is connected not only with particular tools and particular social relations, but also with the particular content of knowledge, with particular powers of intelligence, a particular view of cause and effect, a particular logic—in short, a particular form of thought. To understand earlier modes of thought is, however, uncommonly difficult, much more difficult than to understand the needs of another or his own society.

All the same, however, the connection between the tenets of morals and the social needs has been already proved by so many practical examples that we can accept it as a general rule. If, however, this connection exists, then, an alteration of society must necessitate an alteration in many moral precepts. Their change is thus not only nothing strange, it would be much more strange if with the change of the cause the effect did not also change. These changes are necessary for that very reason, because every form of society requires certain moral precepts suited for its condition.

How diverse and changing are the moral rules is well known. Hence one example suffices to illustrate a morality differing from the present-day European.

Fridtjof Nansen gives us in the tenth chapter of his "Eskimo Life," a very fascinating picture of Eskimo morals, from which I take a few passages.

"One of the most beautiful and marked features in the character of the Eskimo is certainly his honourableness. . . . . For the Eskimo it has especial value that he should be able to rely on his fellows and neighbours. In order, however, that this mutual confidence, without which common action in the battle for life is impossible, should continue, it is necessary that he should act honourably to others as well. . . . For the same reasons they do not lie readily to each other, especially the men. A touching proof of that is the following feature related by Dalajer: 'If they have to describe to each other anything, they are very careful not to paint it more beautiful than it deserves. Nay, if anyone wants to buy anything which he has not seen, the seller describes the thing, however much he may wish to sell it, always as something less good than it is.'"

The morals of advertising are unknown for the Eskimos as yet. Certainly that applies to their intercourse with each other. To strangers they are less strict.

"Fisticuff fights and that sort of ruffianism is not to be seen among them." Murder is also a great rarity, "and where it happens is not a consequence of economic quarrels but of love affairs." They consider it dreadful to kill a fellow man. War is, hence, quite incomprehensible to them, and abominable; their language has not even a word for it; and soldiers and officers who have been trained to the calling of killing people are to them simply butchers of men.

"One of the commandments against which the Greenlanders oftenest sin is the seventh. Virtue and chastity do not stand in great esteem in Greenland. Many look on it (on the West Coast) as no great shame if an unmarried girl has children. While we were in Gothard two girls there were pregnant, but they in

no way concealed it, and seemed, from the evident proof that they were not looked down on, to be almost proud. But even of the South Coast Holm says that it is there no shame if an unmarried girl has children.

"Egede also says that the women look on it as an especial bit of luck and a great honour to have intimate connection with an Angekok—that is, one of their prophets and wise men—and adds: Even many men are very glad, and will pay the Angekok for sleeping with their wives, especially if they themselves cannot have children by them."

"The freedom of Eskimo women is thus very different to that appertaining to the Germanic woman. The reason certainly lies in the fact that while the maintenance of the inheritance of the race and family has always played a great rôle with the Germans, this has no importance for the Eskimo, because he has nothing to inherit, and for him the main point is to have children.

"We naturally look on this morality as bad. That, however, is by no means to say that it is so for the Eskimos. We must absolutely guard against condemning from our standpoint views which have been developed through many generations and after long experience by a people, however much they contradict our own. The views of good and bad are extraordinarily different on this earth. As an example, I might quote that when Mr. Egede had spoken to an Eskimo girl of love of God and our neighbour, she said, 'I have proved that I love my neighbour, because an old woman who was ill and could not die, begged me that I would take her, for a payment, to the steep cliff from which those always are thrown who can live no more. And, because I love my people, I took her there for nothing, and threw her down from the rocks.'

"Egede thought that this was a bad act, and said that she had murdered a human being. She said no, she had had great sympathy with the old woman, and had wept as she fell. Are we to call this a good or bad act?

"We have seen that the necessity of killing old and sick members of society very easily arises with a limited food supply, and this killing becomes, then, signalised as a moral act.

"When the same Egede said that God punished the wicked, an Eskimo said to him he also belonged to those who punished the wicked since he had killed three old women who were witches.

"The same difference in the conception of good and bad is to be seen in regard to the Seventh Commandment. The Eskimo puts the commandment, 'Be fruitful and multiply' higher that chastity. He has every reason for that as his race is by nature less prolific."

Finally, a quotation from a letter sent by a converted Eskimo to Paul Egede, who worked in the middle of the eighteenth century in Greenland as a missionary, and found the Eskimo morals almost untouched by European influence. This Eskimo had heard of the Colonial wars between the English and Dutch, and expresses his horror over this inhumanity.

"If we have only so much food that we can satisfy our hunger, and get enough skin to keep out the cold, we are contented, and thou thyself knowest that we let the next day look after itself. We would not on that account carry war on the sea, even if we could. . . . . We can say the sea that washes our coasts belongs to us as well as the walruses, whales, seals and salmon swimming in it, still we have no objection when others take what they require from the great supply, as they require it. We have the great luck not to be so greedy by nature as them. . . . . It is really astonishing, my dear Paul! Your people know that there is a God, the ruler and guider of all things, that after this life they will be either happy or damned, according as they have behaved themselves, and yet they live as though they had been ordered to be wicked, and as if sin would bring them advantage and honour. My countrymen know nothing either of God or Devil, and yet they behave respectably, deal kindly and friendly with each other, tell each other everything, and create their means of existence in common."

It is the opposition of the morality of a primitive communism to capitalist morality which appears here. But still another distinction arises. In the Eskimo society the theory and practice of morality agree with one another; in capitalist society a division exists between the two. The ground for that we will soon learn.

*(b) The System of Production and Its Superstructure.*

The moral rules alter with the society, yet not uninterruptedly, and not in the same fashion and degree as the social needs. They become promptly recognised and felt as rules of conduct because they have become habitual. Once they have taken root as such, they can then for a long time lead an independent life, while technical progress advances, and therewith the development of the method of production and the transformation of the social needs goes on.

It is with the principles of morality as with the rest of the complicated sociological superstructure which raises itself on the method of production, it can break away from its foundation and lead an independent life for a time.

The discovery of this fact has relieved all those elements who could not escape the influence of the Marxian thought, but to whom nevertheless the consequences of the economic development are extremely awkward, and who in the manner of Kant would like to smuggle in the spirit as an independent driving power in the development of the social organism. To these the discovery of the fact that the intellectual factors of society can temporarily work independently in it was very convenient. With that they hoped to have finally found the wished-for reciprocal action—the economic factor working on the spirit and the spirit on the economic factor. Both were to rule the social development; either in the manner that at one period the economic factor, at another, again, the spiritual force drives the society forward, or in the manner that both together and side by side produce a common result, that, in other words, our will and wishes can at least occa-

sionally break through the hard economic necessity of their own strength, and can change it.

Undoubtedly there is a reciprocal action between the economic basis and its spiritual superstructure—morality, religion, art, etc. We do not speak here of the intellectual influence of inventions, that belongs to the technical conditions in which the spirit plays a part ultimately by the side of the tool; technic is the conscious discovery and application of tools by thinking men.

Like the other ideological factors morality can also advance the economic and social development. Just in this lies its social importance. Since certain social rules arise from certain social needs, they will render the social co-operation so much the more easy the better they are adapted to the society which makes them.

Morality thus reacts on the social life. But that only holds good so long as it is dependent upon the latter, as it meets the social needs from which it sprang.

As soon as morality begins to lead a life independent of society, as soon as it is no longer controlled by the latter, the reaction takes on another character. The further it is now developed the more is that development purely logical and formal. As soon as it is cut off from the influence of the outer world it can create no more new conceptions but only arrange those already attained, so that the contradictions disappear from them. Getting rid of the contradictions, winning a unitary conception, solving all problems which arise from the contradictions, that is the work of the thinking spirit. With that it can, however, only secure the intellectual superstructure already set up, not rise superior to itself. Only the appearance of new contradictions, new problems, can affect a new development. The human spirit does not, however, create contradictions from its own inner being; they are produced in it only by the impress of the surrounding world on it.

As soon as the moral principles grow independent, they cease to be, in consequence, an element of social progress. They ossify, become a conservative element, an obstacle to progress. Thus can that happen in the human society which is impossible in the animal, morality can become, instead of an indispensable social bond, the means of an intolerable restraint on social life. That is also a reciprocal action, but not one in the sense of our anti-materialist moralists.

The contradictions between distinct moral principles and distinct social needs can arrive at a certain degree of intensity in primitive society; they then become, however, still greater with the appearance of class antagonism. If in the society without classes the adherence to particular moral principles is only a matter of habit, it only requires for them supervision that the force of habit be overcome. From now on the maintenance of particular moral principles becomes a matter of interest, often of a very powerful interest. And now appear, also weapons of force, of physical compulsion to keep down the exploited classes, and this means of compulsion is placed also at the service of "morality," to secure obedience to moral principles which are in the interest of the ruling classes.

The classless society needs no such compulsory weapons. Certainly, even in it the social instincts do not always suffice to achieve the observance by every individual of the moral code; the strength of the social impulses is very different in the different individuals, and just as different to that of the other instincts: those of self-maintenance and reproduction. The first do not always win the upper hand. But as a means of compulsion, of punishment for others, public opinion—the opinion of the society—suffices in such cases for the classless society. It does not create in us the moral law, the feeling of duty. Conscience works in us when no one sees us, and the power of public opinion is entirely excluded; it can even, under circumstances, in a society filled with class antagonisms and contradictory moral codes, force us to defy public opinion.

But public opinion works in a classless society as a sufficient weapon of police, of the public obedience to moral codes. The individual is so small compared to society that he has not the strength to defy their unanimous voice. This has so crushing an effect that it needs no further means of compulsion or punishment to secure the undisturbed course of the social life. Even to-day in the class society we see that the public opinion of their own class, or, where that has been abandoned, of the class or party which they join, is more powerful that the compulsory weapons of the State. Prison, poverty and death are preferred by people to shame.

But the public opinion of one class does not work on the opposite class. Certainly society can, so long as there are no class antagonisms in it, hold the individual in check through the power of its opinion, and force obedience to its laws, when the social instincts in the breast of the individual do not suffice. But public opinion fails where it is not the individual against society, but class against class. Then the ruling class must apply other weapons of compulsion if they are to prevail; means of superior physical or economic might, of superior organisation, or even of superior intelligence. To the soldiers, police, and judges are joined the priests as an additional means of rule, and it is just the ecclesiastical organisation to whom the special task falls of conserving the traditional morality. This connection between religion and morality is achieved so much easier as the new religions which appear at the time of the decay of the primitive communism and the Gentile society stand in strong opposition to the ancient nature religions, whose roots reach back to the old classless period, and which know no special priest caste. In the old religions Divinity and Ethics are not joined together. The new religions, on the other hand, grow on the soil of that philosophy in which Ethics and the belief in God are most intimately bound up together; the one factor supporting the other. Since then religion and ethics have been intimately bound up together as a weapon of rule. Certainly the

moral law is a product of the social nature of man; certainly the moral code of a time is the product of particular social needs; certainly have neither the one nor the other anything to do with religion. But that code of morals, which must be maintained for the people in the interests of the ruling class, requires religion badly, and the entire ecclesiastical organism for its support. Without this it would soon go to pieces.

### *(c) Old and New.*

The longer, however, the outlived moral standards remain in force, while the economic development advances and creates new social needs, which demand new moral needs, so much the greater will be the contradiction between the ruling morals of society and the life and action of its members.

But this contradiction shows itself in the different classes in different manners. The conservative classes, those whose existence rest on the old social conditions, cling firmly to the old morality. But only in theory. In actual practice they cannot escape the influence of the new social conditions. The well-known contradiction between moral theory and practice begins here. It seems to many a natural law of morals, whose demands seem as something desirable but unrealisable. Here again, however, the contradiction between theory and practice in morality can take two forms. Classes and indivduals, full of a sense of their own strength, ride roughshod over the demands of the traditional morality, whose necessity they certainly recognise for others. Classes and individuals who feel themselves weak transgress secretly against the moral code which they publicly preach. Thus this phase leads, according to the historical situation of the decaying classes, either to cynicism or hypocrisy. At the same time, however, there disappears very easily, as we have seen, in this very class, the power of the social interests in consequence of the growth of private interests, as well as the possibility of allowing their place in the coming battles to be taken

by hirelings, whereby they avoid entering personally into the fray.

All these produce in conservative or ruling classes those phenomena which we sum up as immorality.

Materialist moralists, to whom the moral codes are simple conventional fashions, deny the possibility of an immorality of that kind as a social phenomenon. As all morality is relative, is that which is called immorality simply a deviating kind of morality?

On the other hand, idealist moralists conclude from the fact that there are entire immoral classes and societies that there must be a moral code eternal and independent of time and space; a standard independent of the changing social conditions on which we can measure the morals of every society and class.

Unfortunately, however, that element of human morality which, if not independent of time and space, is yet older than the changing social relations, the social instinct, is just that which the human morality has in common with the animal. What, however, is specifically human in morality, the moral codes, is subject to continual change. That does not prove, all the same, that a class or a social group cannot be immoral; it proves simply that so far at least as the moral standards are concerned, there is just as little absolute morality as absolute immorality. Even the immorality is in this respect a relative idea, as absolute immorality is to be regarded only as a lack of those social impulses and virtues which man has inherited from the social animals.

If we look, on the other hand, on immorality as an offence against the laws of morality, then it implies no longer the divergence from a distinct standard holding good for all times and places, but the contradiction of the moral practice to its own moral principles; it implies the transgression against moral laws which people themselves recognise and put forward as necessary. It is thus nonsense to declare particular moral principles of any people or class, which are recognised as such, to be immoral simply because they contradict our moral code. Immorality can never be more than

a deviation from our own moral code, never from a strange one. The same phenomenon, say, of free sexual intercourse or of indifference to property can in one case be the product of moral depravity, in a society where a strict monogamy and the sacredness of property are recognised as necessary; in another case it can be the highly moral product of a healthy social organism which requires for its social needs neither the fixed property in a particular woman, nor that in particular means of conservation and production.

### *(d) The Moral Ideal.*

If, however, the growing contradiction between the changing social conditions and the weakening hold of morality in the ruling classes tend to growing immorality, and shows itself in an increase of hypocrisy and cynicism, which often goes hand in hand with a weakening of the social impulses, so does it lead to quite other results in the rising and exploited class. Their interests are in complete antagonism to the social foundation which created the ruling morality. They have not the smallest reason to accept it, they have every ground to oppose it. The more conscious they become of their antagonisms to the ruling social order the more will their moral indignation grow as well, the more will they oppose to the old traditional morality a new morality, which they are about to make the morality of society as a whole. Thus arises in the uprising classes a moral ideal, which grows ever bolder the more they gain in strength. At the same time, as we have already seen, the power of the social instincts in the same classes will be especially developed by means of the class war, so that with the daring of the new moral ideal the enthusiasm for the same also increases. Thus the same evolution which produces in conservative or decaying classes increasing immorality, produces in the rising classes a mass of phenomena which we sum up under the name of ethical idealism, which is not, however, to be confused with philosophical idealism.

The very uprising classes are, indeed, often inclined to philosophical materialism, which the declining classes oppose from the moment when they become conscious that reality has passed the sentence of death upon them, and feel that they can only look for salvation from supernatural powers—divine or ethical.

The content of the new moral ideal is not always very clear. It does not emerge from any scientific knowledge of the social organism, which is often enough quite unknown to the authors of the ideal, but from a deep social need, a burning desire, an energetic will for something other than the existing, for something which is the opposite of the existing; and thus, also, this moral ideal is in reality only something purely negative, nothing more than opposition to the existing hypocrisy.

So long as class rule has existed, the ruling morality guards; wherever a sharp class antagonism has been formed, slavery, inequality, exploitation. Thus the moral ideal of the uprising classes in historical times has always had the same appearance, always that which the French Revolution summed up with the words, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. It would seem as if this were the ideal implanted in every human breast, independent of time and space, as if it were the task of the human race to strive from its beginning for the same moral ideal, as if the evolution of man consisted in the gradual approach to this ideal which continually looms before him.

But if we examine more closely, we find that the agreement of the moral ideal of the various historical epochs is only very superficial, and that behind these lie great differences of social aims, which correspond to the differences of the social situation at the time.

If we compare Christianity, the French Revolution, and the Social-Democracy to-day, we find that Liberty and Equality for all meant something quite different, according to their attitude towards property and production. The primeval Christian demanded equality of property in the manner that they asked for its equal division for purposes of consumption for all, and

under freedom they understood the emancipation from all work as is the lot of the lilies of the field who neither toil nor spin and yet enjoy their life.

The French Revolution again understood by equality the equality of property rights. Private property was declared to be sacred. And true freedom was for it the freedom to apply property in economic life, according to pleasure, in the most profitable manner.

Finally, the Social-Democracy neither swears by private property nor does it demand its division. It demands its socialisation, and the equality which it strives for is the equal right of all to the products of social labour. Again, the social freedom which it asks for is neither freedom to dispose arbitrarily of the means of production and to produce at will, but the limitation of the necessary labour through the gathering in of those capable of working and through the most extended application of labour-saving machinery and methods. In this way the necessary labour which cannot be free, but must be socially regulated, can be reduced to a minimum for all, and to all a sufficient time assured of freedom, for free artistic and scientific activity, for free enjoyment of life. Social freedom—we do not speak here of political—through the greatest possible shortening of the period of necessary labour: that is freedom as meant by the Social-Democracy.

It will be seen that the same moral ideal of Freedom and Equality can embrace very different social ideals. The external agreement of the moral ideals of different times and countries is, however, not the result of a moral law independent of time and space which springs up in man from a supernatural world, but only the consequence of the fact that despite all social differences the main outlines of class rule in human society have always been the same.

All the same, a new moral ideal cannot simply arise from the class antagonism. Even within the conservative classes there may be individuals who develop with their class socially only loose ties and are without class consciousness. With that, however, they possess strong social instincts and virtues, which makes them

hate all hypocrisy and cynicism, and, being highly intelligent, they see clearly the contradiction between the traditional moral code and the social needs. Such individuals are bound also to come to the point of setting up the new moral ideal. But whether their new ideal shall obtain social force depends upon whether they result in class ideals or not. Only the motive power of the class war can work fruitfully on the moral ideal, because only the class war, and not the single-handed endeavours of self-interested people, possesses the strength to develop society farther and to meet the needs of the higher developed method of production. And, so far as the moral ideal can in any degree be realised, is only to be attained through an alteration of society.

A peculiar fatality has ruled hitherto that the moral ideal should never be reached. That will be easily understood when we consider its origin. The moral ideal is nothing else than the complex of wishes and endeavours which are called forth by the opposition to the existing state of affairs. As the motive power of the class war, as a means to collect the forces of the uprising classes to the struggle against the existing, and to spur them on, it is a powerful lever in the overturning of this. But the new social conditions, which come in the place of the old, do not depend on the form of the moral ideal, but upon the given natural conditions : the technical conditions, the natural milieu, the nature of the neighbours and predecessors of the existing society, etc.

A new society can thus easily diverge a considerable distance from the moral ideal of those who brought it about, and so much the more the less the moral indignation was allied with knowledge of the material conditions. Thus the ideal ended continually in disillusionment ; proving itself to be an illusion after it had done its historical duty and had worked as an inspirer in the destruction of the old.

We have seen above how in the conservative classes the opposition between moral theory and practice arises, so that morality appears to them as that which

everybody demands but nobody practises—something which is beyond our strength, which is only given to supernatural powers to carry out. Here we see in the revolutionary classes a different kind of antagonism arise between moral theory and practice, the antagonism between the moral ideal and the reality created by the social revolution.

Here, again, morality appears as something which everybody strives for but nobody attains—as, in fact, the unattainable for earthly beings. No wonder then the moralists think that morality has a supernatural origin, and that our animal being which clings to the earth is responsible for the fact that we can only gaze wistfully at its picture from afar without being able to arrive at it.

From this heavenly height morality is drawn down to earth by historical materialism. We make acquaintance with its animal origin, and see how its changes in human society are conditioned by the changes which this has gone through, driven on by the development of the technic. And the moral ideal is revealed in its purely negative character as opposed to the existing moral order, and its importance is recognised as the motive power of the class and as a means to collect and inspire the forces of the revolutionary classes. At the same time, however, the moral ideal will be deprived of its power to direct their policy. Not from our moral ideal, but from distinct material conditions does the policy depend which the social development takes. These material conditions have already at earlier periods, to a certain extent, determined the moral will, the social aims of the uprising classes, but for the most part unconsciously. Or if a conscious directing social knowledge was already to hand, as in the eighteenth century, it worked, all the same, unsystematically, and not consistently, at the formation of the social aims.

It was the materialist conception of history which first completely deposed the moral ideal as the directing factor of the social evolution, and which taught us to deduce our social aims solely from the knowledge of the

material foundations. And at the same time it has shown how we can ensure that the new reality resulting from the Revolution shall come up to the ideal, how illusions and disappointments are to be avoided. Whether they can be really avoided depends upon the degree of the insight acquired into the laws of development, and of the movement of the social organism, its forces and organs.

With that the moral ideal will not be deprived of its influence on society; this influence will simply be reduced to its proper dimensions. Like the social and the moral instinct the moral ideal is not an aim, but a force or a weapon in the social struggle for life. The moral ideal is a special weapon for the peculiar circumstances of the class war.

Even the Social-Democracy, as the organisation of the proletariat in its class war, cannot do without the moral ideal, the moral indignation against exploitation and class rule. But this ideal has nothing to find in scientific Socialism, which is the scientific examination of the laws of the development and movement of the social organism, for the purpose of knowing the necessary tendencies and aims of the proletarian class war.

Certainly in Socialism the student is always a fighter as well, and no man can artificially cut himself in two parts, of which the one has nothing to do with the other. Thus even with Marx in his scientific research there occasionally breaks through the influence of a moral ideal. But he always endeavours, and rightly, to banish it where he can. Because the moral ideal becomes a source of error in science, when it takes on itself to point out to it its aims. Science has only to do with the recognition of the necessary. It can certainly arrive at prescribing a "shall," but this dare only come up as a consequence of the insight into the necessary. It must decline to discover a "shall" which is not to be recognised as a necessity founded in the world of phenomena. The Ethic must always be only an object of science; this has to study the moral instincts as well as the moral ideals, and explain them; it cannot take advice from them as to the results at

which it is to arrive. Science stands above Ethics, its results are just as little moral or immoral as necessity is moral or immoral.

All the same, even in the winning and making known of scientific knowledge, morality is not got rid of. New scientific knowledge implies often the upsetting of traditional and deeply-rooted conceptions which had grown to a fixed habit. In societies which include class antagonisms, new scientific knowledge, especially that of social conditions, implies, for the most part however, damage to the interests of particular classes. To discover and propagate scientific knowledge which is incompatible with the interests of the ruling classes, is to declare war on these. It assumes not simply a high degree of intelligence, but also ability and willingness to fight, as well as independence from the ruling classes, and, before all, a strong moral feeling, strong social instincts, a ruthless striving for knowledge, and to spread the truth with a warm desire to help the oppressed, uprising classes.

But even this last desire is likely to mislead if it does not play a simple negative part, as repudiation of the validity of the ideas of the ruling classes, and as a spur to overcoming the obstacles which the opposing class interests bring against the social development, but aspires to rise above that, and to take the direction, laying down certain aims which have to be attained through social study.

Even though the conscious aim of the class war in scientific Socialism has been transformed from a moral into an economic aim, it loses none of its greatness. Since that which appeared to all social renovators hitherto as a moral ideal, which could not be attained by them; for that the economic conditions are at length given, that ideal we can now recognise for the first time in the history of the world as a necessary result of the economic development, viz., the abolition of class, not the abolition of all professional distinctions, not the abolition of division of labour, but certainly the abolition of all social distinctions and antagonisms which arise from private property in the means of

production and from the exclusive chaining down of the mass of the people to the function of material production. The means of production have become so enormous, that they burst to-day the frame of private property. The productivity of labour is grown so huge that to-day already a considerable diminution of the labour time is possible for all workers. Thus grow the foundations for the abolition, not of the division of labour, not of the professions, but of the antagonism of rich and poor, exploiters and exploited, ignorant and wise.

At the same time, however, the division of labour is so far developed as to embrace that territory which remained so many thousands of years closed to it—the family hearth. The woman is torn from it, and drawn into the realm of division of labour, so long a monopoly of the men. With that, naturally, the natural distinctions which exist between the sexes do not disappear, it can also allow many social distinctions, as well as many a distinction in the moral demands which are made on them, to continue to exist or even revive such, but it will certainly cause all those distinctions to disappear from State and society which arise out of the fact that the woman is tied down to the private household duties, and excluded from the callings of the divided labour. In this sense we shall see not simply the abolition of the exploitation of one class by another, but the abolition of the subjection of woman to man.

And at the same time the world commerce attains such dimensions, the international economic relations are drawn so close that therewith the foundation is laid for superseding private property in the means of production, the overcoming of natural antagonisms, the end of war and armaments, and for the possibility of permanent peace between the nations.

Where is a moral idea which opens such splendid vistas? And yet they are won from sober, economic considerations, and not from intoxication through the moral ideals of freedom, equality and fraternity, justice, humanity!

And these outlooks are no mere expectations of conditions which only ought to come, which we simply wish and will, but outlooks on conditions which must come, which are necessary. Certainly not necessary in the fatalist sense, that a higher power will present them to us of itself, but necessary, unavoidable, in the sense that the inventors improve technic, and the capitalists, in their desire for profit, revolutionise the whole economic life, as it is also inevitable that the workers aim for shorter hours of labour and higher wages, that they organise themselves, that they fight the capitalist class and its state, as it is inevitable that they aim for the conquest of political power and the overthrow of capitalist ruling. Socialism is inevitable because the class war and the victory of the proletariat is inevitable.

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