IMMANUEL KANT

IN HIS RELATION TO MODERN HISTORY.

PAPER READ BEFORE THE FELLOWS OF THE ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY ON THE 11th MARCH 1875,

BY

DR G. G. ZERFFI, F.R.S.L., F.R.Hist.S.,

ONE OF THE LECTURERS IN H.M. DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND ART.

PUBLISHED BY THOMAS SCOTT,

NO. 11, THE TERRACE, FARQUHAR ROAD,

UPPER NORWOOD, LONDON, S.E.

Price Sixpence.

IMMANUEL KANT.

SINGLE individuals stand to the general historical development of humanity in the same relation as do detached stones, statues, corbels, spires, or weather-cocks to a building. The individual, in the eyes of the philosophical historian, has only so far an interest as he forms a link in the great chain of human activities, or one stone in the historical dome. The individual is the outgrowth of his times, his dwelling-place or country, the intellectual and social atmosphere in which he has been reared and nourished. In proposing to read a paper on Immanuel Kant I did not intend to take up your time with his private life, little biographical notices of his character, but to place before you my objective views as to his influence on our modern mode of thinking, as the basis of our modern history. I purpose to keep to the general principles which I laid down before you in my paper "On the possibility of a strictly scientific treatment of Universal History" (see vol. III. Transactions of the R. H. S., page 380); and shall try to apply those principles in sketching the development of an individual in whom the static and dynamic forces working in humanity were well balanced. Kant, as philosopher, is merely a link in a long chain of mighty speculative and empirical, or deductive and inductive thinkers, who serve to illustrate, that from the earliest times of the awakening consciousness of humanity man tried to bring about an understanding of the natural

and intellectual phenomena surrounding him. The method which these thinkers pursued was either *à priori* or *à posteriori*; they either started with general principles, and reasoned from them down to particulars; or they followed the more thorny path of arguing from particulars in order to come to general conclusions. Finally, Kant stands by himself in founding a system which succeeded in bringing harmony into these two conflicting methods. He may be said to have been the only "deducto-inductive" philosopher; he was a genius, able to grasp mind and matter, the noumenal and phenomenal in their innermost connection, and succeeded in destroying a one-sidedness in philosophy which often had been detrimental to the real progress of science.

Bacon and Descartes opposed the old methods of philosophy, and endeavoured to explain the various phenomena of nature on a merely mechanical basis. But Bacon, after all, was a reviver of the atomistic theory of Demokritos, whilst Leibnitz, in opposing Bacon, Descartes, and Spinoza, and their teleological principles, turned back to Plato and Aristotle, in order to unite *à priori* the conflicting elements of the two Greek philosophers in his theory of monads. Kant is neither exclusively empirical nor teleological, he is the creator of an entirely new mode of thinking and studying. All philosophy before Kant was more or less theology. The circle of experience was extremely narrow; and theology bore all before it: no one could gainsay it. Explanations and hypotheses drawn from the fertile sources of imagination and intuition, productive of surmises and conjecture, had full play and ruled supreme. Free-will, the senses, perception, matter, spirit, body, soul, nature, God, and universe, were settled as entities out of the inner consciousness of poets, prophets, or philosophers. By degrees and slowly, experience tried to collect and heap up observations; which were at first isolated; often in con-

tradiction to certain *à priori* settled assumptions, but subsequently they were arranged and brought into mutual relation, and we see natural sciences take a position apparently opposed to theology, philosophy, and metaphysics. Matter affecting and impressing our senses, acting and reacting on them, was pronounced to be the only thing we could grasp, or know anything of. The experimentalist grew angry with the metaphysicians or theologians, and blamed the efforts of those who argued on matters which he was trying to discover by means of scientific observation. "Either the theologians come to the same final results as we men of science, then they are entirely superfluous; or they persist in opposing us with false assumptions, propagating thus errors which are detrimental to the progress of knowledge, and then they are worse than superfluous; they are altogether pernicious." From this conflict also a division in the scientific world arose. Some devoted themselves exclusively to "realism," others to "idealism." Everywhere at this period we see strife and warfare.

In ancient times, as in the Middle Ages, the experimental sciences were but unruly and undisciplined children, continually finding fault with their mother, speculation; history was yet unknown, mere chronicles, or at the most biographies, existed. The knowledge of connecting laws was wanting, all was guess work, all was a disconnected heap of facts in sciences as well as in history. The discovery of America and the Reformation suddenly changed the very mode of thinking. Without the Reformation, no philosopher of the stamp of Bacon could have been possible. Philosophy detached itself through Bacon from theology, and entered the lists of experimental sciences; so intimate was the connection between philosophy and experiment, that we in England speak of a microscope as a philosophical instrument, and might even call a new method of dyeing silk, or a new way of manuring, a philoso-

phical invention. In consequence of this one-sidedness, inagurated by Bacon, we became more and more devoted to a realistic, or as some people have it, materealistic and practical philosophy, and failed to see that there was a power in us which has to arrange, to systematize, and even to apply what has been gathered on the fields of experience. Opposed to this realistic school were first Descartes and Leibnitz. The pure intellect was to be the source of all knowledge; nothing was worth studying, except what could be reduced to an algebraic formula. Spinoza brought this theory to perfection. Not only nature, but all human life, with all its fluctuating passions, was to be explained by mathematical rules. Man's sufferings, actions, intentions, and motives were to be treated as planes, triangles, spheres, cubes, squares, pyramids, or polyhedrons, &c. Leibnitz tried to save philosophy from these matter-of-fact tendencies. He discovered in mathematics the differential and infinitesimal "calculus;" and in physics a new law—*motion*. He strove to establish a union between primitive and final causes. He had an idea that the contrast between inorganic and organic, natural and spiritual, mechanical and moral elements must cease through the notion of continuity in the unity of gradually progressive, self-acting forces. His system reached its climax in his "Theodicy," altogether beyond the comprehension of human intellect. He dimly felt that there ought to be a union between metaphysics and experience, but the solution of this problem was beyond his powers. Professor Christian Wolf was a thorough dogmatist. Philosophy was to him the knowledge of everything possible. Anything was possible that could be brought under a strict logical law, according to the "principium, identitatis," "contradictionis," and "rationis sufficientis." We were taken back by him to the categories of Aristotle. Experimental philosophy and metaphysics were again separated; the latter was to make

us acquainted with the essence of things from a speculative point of view, this was treated of by Wolf in his Ontology, under the heading "De Entitate;" comprising the simple, compound, final, infinite, perfect, imperfect, accidental, and necessary substances. The universe, soul, and God were discussed according to these ontological categories, as subjects of Wolf's cosmology, pneumatology, and theology. Dogmatism in philosophy celebrated its greatest triumphs before the dazzled eyes of Europe. Dialectics ruled supreme. Explanations were given, and the unfathomable was again fathomed — of course only in words. Kant stepped on the philosophical platform when the dogmatism of Wolf was in its zenith; he was himself a pupil of this mighty metaphysician. The struggle between the sciences, *à priori* and those *à posteriori*, was recommenced. The foundations of metaphysics undermined by Bacon, Descartes, Leibnitz, and Spinoza, stood propped up by Wolf's ingenuity, but his system was terribly shaken again by the mighty sceptical philosophers of England and Scotland. Bacon already denied that metaphysics, treating of the supernatural, could be a science. Locke went further; he set down experience and perceptions as the basis upon which to build up a system of philosophy. Sensation and reflection were to be the leading elements. Bacon declared the supernatural to be an impossibility, and Locke pronounced even the supersensual a mere fiction, opposing Descartes as the latter opposed Bacon. Locke's final dogma was, that experience cannot make us acquainted with the essence of things, but merely with their impressions on our senses. Berkeley, in analysing sensual impressions, found them producing perceptions, and therefore turned upon the realists and proclaimed triumphantly that after all everything is "idea." He thus confounded effect and cause, and pronounced them to be identical. All observations are mere impressions on our senses, but these produce

perceptions, perceptions are ideas, therefore everything is mere idea. All material things if deprived of our perception are *nothing*. There are only perceiving and perceived elements or ideas in us, which take their origin in God. Berkeley's dogma may be summed up thus : God has endowed us with the faculty of perception through impression, all knowledge is therefore of divine origin. His dogmatism led to Hume's scepticism. Hume started by endeavouring to find out, whether we may become conscious of the impressions made by perceptions on our senses, and whether knowledge were possible beyond such perceptions. He assumes only one possible science—mathematics—the conclusions of which are analytic (according to him) by means of equations. Empirical conclusions he wishes only to be based on the law of causation (the nexus causalis), and the whole of his philosophy may be reduced to the question : is a cognisable causal "nexus" between the objects of experience and their impressions on our senses, possible ? He denies this most peremptorily. Reason cannot connect different impressions, and at the same time trace their causes with certainty ; her conclusions are only analytic but never synthetic. All conclusions drawn by experience can therefore never be strictly demonstrated, as we can only recognise the effect but never the necessary cause. Neither reason nor experience can give us real insight into causality, and this very causality is one of the essential factors of science. What we are capable of attaining is a continuation of facts and impressions. The *post hoc* becomes a *propter hoc*, or the "after" a "therefore." This change is performed through our reasoning faculty. The causal nexus is a mere assumption, it is a faith, a belief, like any other, and not a reality. This will suffice to characterise the philosophical stand-point at the period when Kant began his career.

Glancing at the political and social condition of his times, we find him entering the University when Wolf

returned to Halle, and Frederic II. ascended the throne. The seven years' war interrupted his academical studies. He finished his great work at the time when Frederic the Great ended his glorious life. He was attacked and persecuted under the government of Frederic William II., but ended his career, once more allowed to breathe a free and independent thinker under Frederic William III. Kant was born on the 22nd of April 1724 at Königsberg. His ancestors were of Scotch origin, thus Kant indirectly is a countryman of the great Scotchman David Hume, from whom he descended in a direct spiritual line as philosopher. It is often interesting to trace the general law of action and reaction in single individuals. The most influential agents have been educated by those who were to fall a sacrifice to the destructive intellectual powers of their pupils. Bacon was educated by Scholastics; Descartes by Jesuits; Spinoza by Rabbis; and Kant by Pietists. Kant never could understand the unhealthy and deadening principles of his pietistic masters; he learned from them a certain discipline of the mind for which he was always grateful. He was a stern moralist in thought and deed all his life.

Seven years, from 1733 to 1740 he frequented the "Collegium Fredericianum"—nine years (from 1746-1755) he was tutor in three different families; and on the 12th of June 1755 he took his degree with a dissertation "on fire." In April 1756 he was made a private teacher at the University, and he had to spend fifteen years of his life in that position till he was at last appointed "Professor Ordinarius" at the University at Königsberg.

In the year 1756 he delivered his first Lecture; he was so nervous that his voice nearly failed him, and he was scarcely heard—but the next Lecture was better, and at last he became famous for his learning and the amiability of his delivery. He continually asserted that his intention was not to teach what had been

taught, but to suggest and to rouse the minds of his hearers to self-thought and self-reasoning. He declared publicly that his students would not learn philosophy from him—but how to think for themselves. From the year 1760 he took up various subjects besides Philosophy. He lectured to the theological faculty on "Natural Theology;" to large audiences on "Anthropology" and "Physical Geography." In 1763 and 1764 he published his "Only possible means to prove the existence of the Divinity," and his "Observations on the Beautiful and Sublime"—and gave Lectures on these two subjects. In 1781 appeared his greatest work under the title "Critique of pure reason," 1783 he published his "Prolegomena of any possible Metaphysics," 1785 his "Principles of a Metaphysic of Morals," 1786 his "Metaphysical Introduction to Natural Sciences," 1788 his "Critique of Practical Reason," and 1790 his "Critique of our Reasoning Faculty," 1793 his "Religion within the limits of Pure Reason."

He died on the 12th of February 1804. What a period—what a life from 1724-1804! He witnessed the Seven Years' war, the French Revolution, the establishment of the American Republic; the fall of the convention, the rise of Napoleon—the political and social change of everything in Europe. Schiller and Goethe were inspired by him—he saw action and reaction, flux and reflux in human thoughts and achievements—Sciences of unknown subjects sprang up—Geology under Werner began hypothetically to step forward with uncertainty and timidity—Oken proclaimed his theory of evolution in unintelligible alchemistic phrases. Everything appeared to assume new phases. Men were either inclined to Voltairian incredulity, to Rousseau's fanaticism; Hume's scepticism; or Jesuitic bigotry. Mysticism went hand in hand with a negation of all things. Swedenborg stood in the foreground with his supernatural epileptic fits;

whilst Holbach, Grimm, and D'Alembert denied even our spiritual faculty of "negation." The intellectual state of Europe was but a reflex of the social and political condition of those times. Old mediæval France, with her centralised organization grown out of the grossest feudalism, was in dissolution; Germany sighed under 240 major and minor despots, and a childish, almost Chinese, over-regulation in public matters; England was at least parliamentarily free, the abode of the greatest orators that ever raised their voices for the public welfare. America possessed a Washington; France a Robespierre and Napoleon; England a Chatham and Burke; and Germany a Kant, a Hamann, Herder, and Jacobi.

Like a bright sun shedding lustre around, the Teuton philosopher stands high above his times witnessing in serene splendour the intellectual, religious, and political chaos beneath him, out of which grew our 19th Century. Not without meaning has he been placed on the monument of Frederic the Great as the first amongst the mighty generals of the still mightier king. Socially and politically Frederic II., and intellectually and philosophically Immanuel Kant understood the progressively advancing spirit of their times. And therein consists the real merit of a historical character. No glorious battles, no victories, no extensions of territory, no artificially embellished towns, no momentary prosperity in commercial enterprises, can make up for a misunderstanding, or according to my theory for an untimely disturbance of the acting and reacting moral and intellectual forces in humanity. He who in history or sciences dares to touch that balance and disturb its equilibrium, can but bring trouble on humanity, for he forces generation after generation to readjust that balance. Kant's private as well as public life was one great and successful effort to keep our morals and our intellect within the boundaries of the possible.

Independence and the most punctual legality were to be the basis of the individual and of the state, as but an aggregate of individuals. Pure moral principles, without any admixture of dogmatic dross, were to be the moving springs of humanity; our knowledge was to be based on a full consciousness of the possibility and certainty of our conclusions. The most important step to attain this was to trace in the phenomena of human thoughts and actions a certain law. To show how far we, as finite beings, endowed with intellect, might grasp space and time, the infinite, the invisible, the transcendental, and the supersensual, so as not to waste our faculties on matters which must remain for ever unapproachable in the dominion of science, was to render the very greatest service to humanity. Kant achieved this task. His "Critique of Pure Reason" was partly misunderstood, or rather generally not understood at all, or was distorted because some felt it to be a death-warrant of all speculative efforts, metaphysical verbiage and dogmatic quarrels. The book was decried as unintelligible transcendentalism and incomprehensible dialecticism. Kant's interpretation of transcendentalism was one which some people would not like to admit; by this expression he meant simply, to transcend, "to step over" the boundaries of dogmatism, and to ascertain after having shaken off this dead weight, how far we might proceed in the regions of the Supersensual. His great merit was to prove that our transcending certain limits leads to nothing but to mere assumptions; whether such assumptions and surmises are necessary for certain emotional purposes, he does not decide. He affirms our capacity of becoming conscious of perceptions and tries to trace the conditions under which perceptions may be systematized and thus increase our scientific acquirements.

His philosophy is therefore not sceptic, but critical. His very first principle in starting on the thorny

path of philosophy was "never to take an assertion for granted, without having carefully examined it." "Neither affirm nor deny without the most minute investigation."

Who does not see in these propositions the germ of our modern mode of thinking? who does not perceive that the intellectual development of humanity was to be based on principles differing totally from those of antiquated authority or blind faith? He was by no means an anti-dogmatist; he only looked on dogmatic metaphysics and experimental philosophy as two unknown quantities. The more the latter increased, the more the former decreased in value; till, when experimental philosophy went over into scepticism, the standpoint of metaphysics was brought down to *Zero;* at this point Kant pronounced it not only valueless, but utterly useless. The mere playing with words on words, dialectical contortions and distortions, metaphysical writhings and grimaces were utterly repulsive to his noble, straightforward nature. The power that thought in us and was conscious of the process, namely, mind, he not only recognised, but tried to discipline.

He began his philosophical studies in 1740, and thirty years later, he founded his new system. The first work with which he inaugurated his new method of reasoning was published in 1768, and his last appeared in 1798, again, after exactly thirty years of mature reflection. Each decennary had its task. During the first three, he approaches step by step the solution of his system, whilst during the last three, we see him applying his discovery, and bringing his system to perfection. During the first two decennaries (1740-1760), Kant investigates and follows up the postulates of the Leibnitz-Wolf philosophy; during the third (1760-1770), he is occupied with an analysis of the leading English philosophers, especially with Hume's scepticism; and in 1770 he raises himself far above the dogmatic metaphysicians and the dry experimentalists, and takes his own lofty position. During the fourth

decennary, he is silent; during the fifth, he publishes his "Critique of Pure Reason," (1780-1790), and defines the extent to which we may trust our power to draw conclusions, and tries in the last decennary to apply his well-founded system to solve the positive problems of universal history.

During the first period, he enters into an inquiry on the moving forces of the universe; and endeavours to establish a nexus between cause and effect.

During the second period, he traces the possibility or impossibility of proving a first cause. If cause, why first, and how so first? He then comes to the only possible mode of proving the existence of a first cause, namely, the ontological. Out of the mere notion, "God," the existence of God cannot be proved; but, taking all the attributes necessary to form the conception of God, such a being may not only be assumed to exist, but must necessarily exist. In following up Kant's critical reasoning, we arrive at a mathematical conviction of the existence of God, which is of greater value than the mere dogmatic assumption. Anything not in itself contradictory, is cognisable, say the idealists; only that is cognisable which exists, say the realists. Supposing nothing existed, then we could think nothing. In denying these two conditions, we should deny every intellectual and material possibility. Assuming that something is possible, we must look upon it as the sequence of something that existed previously. There must be for everything a final cause. This final cause cannot be denied; its existence, on the contrary, must be assumed. There must be a something before anything is possible without which nothing could be possible. This necessary existence may be conceived as indivisible in its essence, simple in its element, spiritual in its being, eternal in its duration, unchangeable in its condition—in one word, it must be God! This once enunciated and assumed, he went on a step farther and examined the *modus operandi* of our mind, with its intellectual and reasoning faculties.

What, he asked, is within the range of real cognition? He compares metaphysics and mathematics, and finds, that whilst the former is entirely based on analysis, the latter is founded on synthesis.

By drawing a strict distinction between *analytic* and *synthetic* conclusions, Kant created an entirely new stand-point for all our studies. He distinguishes between the emotional, as our moral and æsthetical, and between the intellectual as our reasoning and scientific faculties. As morals and beauty, so are strict reasoning and science analogous elements. Here he is at issue with Hume, who assumes analysis as the basis in mathematics. Kant asserts the very opposite. Quantities and forms are the objects of mathematics—but these quantities and forms are not given, but constructed, they are combined, built up synthetically. To become conscious of a triangle, is to construct the required formal conditions, enabling us to perceive in them a triangle. Metaphysicians, however, have only analysis at their command. Analytic judgments or conclusions are those in which the predicate is already contained in the subject, by which a part of a whole is merely detached. In the assertion, "God is omnipotent," I detach an attribute of the subject God, and assert in reality nothing but that God is God. For, if I have a conception of God, I have also a knowledge of his omnipotence. Such conclusions as these may be very ingenious, but they do not contribute to a widening of our knowledge.

Synthetic conclusions are those in which a predicate is joined to a subject which is altogether extraneous to, and often apparently in contradiction with, it. As "water freezes," I have to prove how, under what conditions, and why water freezes. I have to know what water and what freezing is; whether in such a condition water ceases to be a fluid, and if it cease, what is its condition in a state of crystallisation, what are crystals; does water in a frozen condition still contain heat; what is heat; how can heat be latent in ice; does water freeze

if mixed with salt, why should it freeze with greater difficulty if so mixed. The amount of knowledge acquired through synthetic conclusions is ever increasing —analysis is a mere repetition of the same things. Kant took a mediating position between Descartes and Leibnitz, between Leibnitz and Newton, between Wolf and Crusius, and between Crusius and Hume. Between the English experimentalists and German metaphysicians there appeared always to be an insurmountable gulf. Kant tried to bridge over this gulf. Metaphysics was to be turned into an experimental science. He establishes the principles of natural theology and morals, out of the very properties of things, though we may for ever remain ignorant of their real essence. With reference to the existence of the divinity, he tried this with his ontological proof. With reference to morals, he proceeded in the same way. Every moral action must have an aim or purpose—either an aim for another secondary aim, or for its own final purpose. In both instances, the action is caused and necessary; but, in the first instance, it is conditional, and in the second, unconditional. An action done for a secondary purpose, for hope of reward or for fear of punishment, is at the utmost right, clever, or reasonable, but it is not absolutely moral. In order to become moral, it must be done unconditionally, for its own sake. This led him to the contemplation of the beautiful which Hutcheson and Shaftsbury before him closely connected with our moral feelings. Morals and æsthetics are so closely allied, that our moral feelings are but a *taste* for right action; Shaftsbury calls morals the beautiful in our emotions, the harmony in our sentiments, the right proportion between our self-love and benevolence. Virtue is beauty of action; our sense of virtue is but our æsthetical feeling put into practice; whilst art puts it into forms. Virtue and taste are innate forces in human nature, like any other faculty of our mind, but they have to be

developed, cultivated and fostered. For morals and æsthetics have one common root, they complete one another. Art was thus elevated to its very highest standard. How Kant's lofty and sublime ideas influenced poetry may be best studied in the works of the immortal Schiller, whose writings are permeated with Kant's theories and principles. To suggest was the principal aim of all his writings of this period. The student was not to be filled with given thoughts, he was to be excited to think; he was neither to be carried or led, he was to be made to walk for himself. "In inverting this method of teaching, the students pick up some kind of reasoning before ever their intellect has been cultivated, and they carry about a mere borrowed science. This is the cause that we meet with learned men, who have so little intellect, and why our academies send so many more muddled (abgeschmackte) heads into the world than any other state of the community."

During the third period of his mental evolution Kant occupied himself with a close investigation of our mental functions. Psychology and physiology are with him not separated but closely united studies. The workings of the brain and the mind were in his eyes in close relation, and he attributed all visions, fanaticism, melancholy and sentimental amativeness to a greater or lesser degree of mental aberration; the cause of which must be sought in the derangement of our cerebral organs.

If the phantoms of our imagination turn into visions; if our inner sensations become outwardly perceptible, our senses are in a state of dream. If our reason assumes certain conceptions of its own as realities our reason is in a state of dream. "There are emotional dreams, and there are dreams of our intellectual faculty. Visions belong to the first class; metaphysics, undoubtedly, to the second." He thus arrives at a point when metaphysics and madness are

treated as equal aberrations of our emotional and mental nature, though their origin is distinct, according to our different organization. Dogmatists and Metaphysicians, visionaries and ghost-seers are declared to be but "airy architects of imaginary worlds." Let them dream on as long as they like—that they but dream, becomes day by day clearer. Metaphysics were developed by Kant's inquiries into a study to make ourselves acquainted with the *limitation of human reason.* We may, with its aid, as Goethe says in a Kantian sense

> "There see that you can clearly explain
> What fits not into the human brain."

This slow and gradual destruction of all hollow knowledge led us to a greater culture of those sciences which are possible, and have become an ever-growing barrier to false and credulous sentimentalism, and emotional dogmatism. The "*supersensual*" is not within the boundaries of human reason. Transcendental philosophy has to deal with experience, and not to ignore it. No knowledge is possible beyond the domains of our direct perception; of the essence of things we know nothing; the noumenal is and must remain to us a mystery; the phenomenal is within our grasp. An absolute psychology, cosmology, or theology is impossible. Kant thus does not deny the existence of the "supersensual," he only denies our faculty of becoming cognisant of it. What an immense stride towards a really *human*, and, at the same time, *humane* investigation of all those elements, which ought to form the basis of our possible studies. Kant then goes farther and proves with his trenchant power of criticism that morals are independent of metaphysics, that humanity in general and every individual in particular carry the regulating force of morals already in their very organization. He distinguishes between *opinion*, *faith*, and *knowledge.* We may have reasons to make

a statement, but these reasons may be based on an utterly *subjective* conviction, such a conviction is but an opinion and does not exclude doubt; if, however, our convictions are based on objective observation, our opinion rises into the reliable domain of *knowledge*; if again our convictions are based on subjective elements supported by doubtful objective proofs, we may, individually, be convinced of certain assumed facts, we may believe in them, but we do not know. In applying these important distinctions to the whole sphere of our intellectual and material world, we were induced by Kant to draw more definite distinctions between the possible and impossible, the necessary and merely accidental. In the mighty circle of religion we have to bear three points in view. 1. If all faith in a supernatural world be based on morals (Ethic actions) religion cannot have any other essential and real object than a purely moral one; all elements that do not foster pure morality will be secondary, strange, indifferent, or even dangerous. Religion, in fact, with Kant becomes pure Ethics. 2. Ethics are not based on a strictly scientific cognition, or theoretical conviction but on moral actions and practical necessity. Not theoretical assumption, but practical reason becomes thus the basis of religious faith. 3. Granting this, it follows that our practical reason is independent of mere logical operations, that it discards as will and moral force all such boundaries as are erected by speculation, and drives us to conform to laws which must be common to the whole of humanity.

During the fourth period he is silent. The storm of sceptic doubt was conquered. In this period we best perceive the positive results of the convulsions which brought forth Criticism instead of Scepticism—for, though we acknowledge the force of doubt, we think it should be subject to a regulating higher power—viz.: Criticism. During the fifth period he shakes off the fetters of idealism and materialism, and defines in his

"Critique of Pure Reason" the boundaries of man's understanding. In accomplishing this he assumes two principles upon which all knowledge and philosophy must rest. The one is idealistic—subjective, and the other empirical—objective. The inborn intellectual faculty—mind—can as little be neglected as the outer world with its impressions acting on our idealistic subjectivity. He thus founded cosmology—worked out by Alex. v. Humboldt—Geology by Leopold Buch, and Sir Charles Lyell,* and then he paved the way to the grand theory of Darwinism, or the theory of the gradual development of matter; he excited to Anthropology and Ethnology, for he strove, through experience, to trace law in all the phenomena surrounding us, in nature as well as in the subtle regions of our mental operations.

These principles changed the whole system of our philosophical and historical studies. Creation was not assumed as having taken place according to a certain dictum, but we had to investigate the earth's crust to see how far we might trace the gradual formation of our globe. Kant's method produced comparative philology and mythology. Language was not to be a settled gift, but was to be traced back to its first origin; this was the case with the different religions of ancient times. We were not to suppose that millions were left without religious comfort, but to investigate and ascertain how far the religious systems are rooted in the impressions of nature, how far they represent the moral and social condition of certain groups of mankind. This distinction led to a closer study of the nature of man, leading to biology and sociology, but above all to a deeper and systematic study of history. There is no branch of learning which should be cultivated with greater care than history, that is history

* Whose recent death we must all deeply regret—though he left us his immortal works as the most glorious monument of his earthly existence.

from a scientific point of view. What appears in single individuals as mere chance, or the result of coincidence might perhaps be looked upon as subject to law like any other natural phenomenon; though, in the latter case, unconscious material particles are the elements, whilst in history, man with his consciousness, his assumed free will, passions, intellectual and bodily faculties, is the complicated agent. Kant affirmed, (and he can claim the honour of having been the first to do so,) in 1784, when statistical tables were still in their infancy, that in looking on humanity as a whole, apparently disconnected incidents may be brought under the sway of certain laws acting with stern regularity. He drew attention to the complicated phenomena of the changes in the weather, the growth of plants under certain climatological conditions, the course of streams and their influences on the progress of civilization. Individuals, like whole nations, are entirely unconscious of the fact, that whilst they appear to work against one another, or have only their own egotistic aims in view, they are working according to certain laws to accomplish the grand destiny of mankind. If it may be assumed as an axiom, "that the natural capacities of a creature have to develop according to a purpose," we may assert that this must be the case with man too. Applied to animals, we find this law obeyed, and producing natural selection. Any organ not wanted is thrown off. Taking man, we find, that though he is the only consciously reasoning creature on earth, his natural capacities are destined to be developed in the genus, and not in the individual. Thus, the study of a single individual is like the analysis of a single insect without any cognisance of the different varieties of animals. Historical progress is not only not the result of the exertions of single individuals, but those very individuals are but the outgrowths of generations after generations, inheriting their mode of thinking and acting, and finally maturing the innate intellectual

germ to a fruit which in its turn is again the seed of further developments. For the first cause has willed that man, if we except the automatic function of his animal nature, should evolve everything necessary for his happiness and perfection, in opposition to his natural instincts, out of his own reason, or rather out of the sum total of reason, existing in humanity. "The means which nature employs to attain this aim," is, according to Kant, "antagonism," which, in its turn, becomes the very basis of legal order and social comfort. History is but one long series of wars, murders, conquests, intrigues, opposition of individuals against individuals, of families against families, of tribes against tribes, and of nations against nations, as if man only delighted in destruction and ruin. But is this so? On the contrary, what unphilosophical minds bewail, is but a process in operation to attain in the end the greatest amount of happiness for mankind. Man was not destined to be idle, but he has to learn how to use his bodily and intellectual faculties.

Wars, controversies, passions, and strife lead to activity, and activity is life. Wars engender peace; controversies, truth; covetousness, commercial enterprise; passion, virtue; and strife, brotherly love and good will. Antagonism drives us to seek the solution of the only problem that should occupy humanity, to form one grand community, ruled by the laws of right. The most ingenious institutions, all our philosophical systems, all our religious efforts, are but continuous progressive attempts to lead humanity from a savage state to that of civilization. To further the solution of this difficult problem, we want a guide, a leader, and this we find in the consciousness of our nature and knowledge of the past, enabling us to make ourselves acquainted with our destiny. We have not to look to an individual for guidance, but to the supreme principles of right. Individual rulers are only instruments to watch over these principles and see them practised. This

problem of a perfect constitution of humanity will only be attained when man will form a grand international tribunal which will settle the disputes of nations according to just laws binding on humanity at large. As Kant saw in his mind's eye the necessity for the existence of a planet beyond Saturn, the then last known planet of our solar system (1754), which planet, "Uranus," was discovered twenty-six years later, by Herschel (1781); so he foresaw in 1784, that which America and England inaugurated in Geneva nearly ninety years later. An international tribunal settling the disputes of two of the greatest nations of the world at a table covered with green baize, by means of quiet arguments, and not on blood-stained battlefields with the sacrifice of wealth, happiness, and the lives of innumerable human beings. Kant clearly saw that history is but the outer garb of inward forces working in humanity according to a pre-arranged law, which law must be assumed to be as fixed as that by which the solar systems are brought into order and cohesion. The endeavours of modern historians should be to trace this law.

Law has to deal with forces, producing as causes—effects, and these forces must act and react, because a stationary force would be lifeless. The two forces working in antagonism and conflict can but be our moral and intellectual faculties, which, in their disturbed balances explain all the phenomena of history. Kant must be looked upon as the real founder of modern thought, for his ideas, like those of every powerful mind, pervade our whole intellectual and social atmosphere.

The writers following Kant, whether in England or France, consciously or unconsciously continue in the path which he began to hew out for coming generations. Fichte, his antagonist, really strengthened the position he attacked. Schelling worked out, like Comte, with copious verbosity, Kant's principles. Their terminology differs from that of Kant, but in

essence they add nothing to his first principles. Schelling proclaims his immanence of spirit in nature, which immanence we can only trace in law. In asserting that the universe has its ground in what in God is not God, Schelling deviates from Kant, and leads us to the Pythagorean Monad and Dyad, a severance of mind and matter, or of God and creation, which is mere verbiage.

Hegel built on Kant with the difference, that with him the subjective becomes the absolute; whilst the objective is turned into the differentiation of the absolute; adding to these phenomena a third one when the absolute turns from its externality back into itself.

Schoppenhauer and Hartmann continued to develope Kant's principles in an idealistic direction, whilst the host of naturalists, geologists, physiologists, biologists, psychologists, ethnologists, and comparative grammarians follow him, cured of all cravings after the supersensual, and try to ascertain what we may learn in the ever varying empire of the phenomenal.

Kant did not destroy thrones, he made no kings or kinglets, he did not brandish a blood-stained sword, command armies, hold levees, create marshalls, commanders-in-chief, shoot free-thinking men, or trample under foot the rights of nations and individuals, like so many a phantom of glory, that could only be reared in the chaotic disorder of our ill-balanced moral and intellectual forces. Unlike these he did not vanish like a thunder-storm, which purifies the air but leaves wreck and ruin behind.

The mighty warriors often are like swollen mountain streams after a violent shower; bubbling noisily, these streams rush down in torrents, tear down fences and houses, inundate plains and fields—carrying devastation in every one of their waves, and then disappear; whilst the philosopher, of the stamp of the great and immortal Kant, resembles a broad and majestic intellectual river, cutting deeply through mountains, meadows, fields,

villages, and towns, flowing slowly and noiselessly, but spreading happiness, fertility, and abundance around, serving as a mighty high-road to connect nations through their most noble outgrowths, their philosophers and searchers for truth into one grand progressively advancing community.

The great and inexhaustible means for furthering this union is an indefatigable study of history. For is it not a calumny of the Creator, whose wisdom we continually praise in a thousand tongues, to assume, that we ought to study only certain of his works, and neglect altogether the Creator's fairest product, man in his gradual development? In the unconscious regions of the empire of nature, in stars and nebulæ, solar systems, crystallisations and chemical combinations we trace wisdom, law, and order; only the stages of man's intellectual activity, as they present themselves in history, are looked upon as an eternal reproach to the Creator, who is assumed to have acted on firm principles in the minutest of his inorganic or organic creatures, but who is thought to have left humanity without aim, law, or purpose on this globe, so that we are forced to turn our eyes despairingly from this world and to hope for the fulfilment of our destiny in unknown regions.

History treated from a scientific point of view teaches us, that this is not the case.

History as it is usually written without the basis of a general principle or merely as an accumulation of disconnected facts, state-enactments, or copied documents collected in musty archives, is only very useful building material, out of which we have to construct an intelligible and comprehensive system of history. It is distressing to contemplate what later generations may do with history if details grow at the ratio of the last twenty or seventy years. Unfortunately, professed historians, ignorant as they too often are, assert that "history is a mere child's box of letters out of which

the historian picks what he wants to spell out;" but this is the view of a narrow-minded state-paper copyist; and not of a philosophical historian, whose aim can never be to glorify individuals or to distort facts according to the wants of a party or the fashion of a period, but to look upon humanity as one great whole, and to trace in its complicated actions, order based on law.

The historical world is as little barred as the ideal world—both are open; it is our faculty of seeing blinded by details, it is our mind confused by isolated facts, that will or cannot comprehend the stern law that drives man towards his real destiny: the greatest possible happiness of all united into one common brotherhood.

TURNBULL AND SPEARS, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.