

BEFORE AND SINCE KANT.

THE century that ends with the year 1881 has been fruitful in efforts and advances towards a philosophy of nature. One hundred years ago the first edition of the *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* was printed. This book, one of the most influential that philosophic thought has ever produced, was intended by its author as an introduction to a system of 'philosophy, a "criticism" that should determine the only possible conditions of a successful metaphysic. Kant himself never lived to complete his system, yet very possibly the first *Kritik*, with the *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* and the *Kritik der Urtheilskraft* which followed, did far more than the rest of his system, had he finished it, could have accomplished for the direction of future philosophy. The result of the first *Kritik* alone is, that we all now live, philosophically speaking, in a Kantian atmosphere. The problems of critical philosophy, as proposed by the master, are for us still the fundamental ones. We must build up our philosophy on his foundation. Much that he thought essential we may indeed have to reject. Much of what seemed plain to him we doubt. But still the fact remains, that as all European thought since Socrates has been in a sense Socratic, so, in its own way and measure, all modern thinking during the past century has been Kantian.

In what sense this is true we shall better understand if we review very briefly the methods adopted in the study of the philosophy of nature before and since Kant. We shall at first speak of certain familiar facts of thought-history, but a summary of them is essential to what we have to say hereafter.

Two great rival methods govern the divided thought-tendencies of the pre-Kantian modern philosophy. Of these the first is represented by Descartes. He describes it, in his *Discours de la Méthode*, as a method which was to combine the advantages of the traditional logic, of the ancient geometrical analysis, and of the more modern algebra, and which was to avoid the faults of all three. This new method was stated in the famous

four rules, which might be thus condensed: (1) Believe only what is perfectly evident; (2) Divide every complex subject into simple parts; (3) Conduct every train of thought in order, beginning with simpler matters and proceeding to more complex; (4) Classify and enumerate so as to omit nothing from consideration. That is, in brief, study nature with the intent of making everything clear to your mind, and assume that whatever is clear to you must be true. This method, of course, laid the greatest stress on the need for the reduction of all knowledge to simple and fundamental principles. It aimed to satisfy what is largely an emotional demand, the demand for the feeling of assurance, and for simple and general ideas. It did not first go submissively to experience; not did it even resolutely criticise the claims of thought. With great pretenses to be free from assumptions and to doubt everything not yet established, it in fact purposed from the beginning only such criticism as should prepare the way for a fixed, all-embracing, dogmatic system.

The method of Descartes, therefore, received its perfect development in the system of Spinoza. Here there are certain fundamental principles assumed, and by means of these certain primary thought-needs are satisfied, certain important ethical postulates developed to their consequences. Experience is consulted, but not in the first place. The business of thinkers according to Spinoza is not to begin with the things of the phenomenal world, but with the infinite; one must first deduce the possibility and the nature of finite existence before studying it in detail. The finite things are not allowed to speak for themselves. All this means, what? Weakness of thought? A tendency to metaphysical absurdity? No; but an imperfect grasping of the whole problem of the philosophy of nature. Truth must satisfy the demands of thought; in so far Spinoza is right. But the demands of thought are of two kinds. Thought wants to build up, and it wants also to criticise. One half of our thinking consists in forming subjectively satisfactory pictures of what is possible; the other half consists in criticising, often in tearing to pieces these pictures. The subjective philosophy of Descartes and Spinoza forgets this. "What is clear must be true." Very good, no

doubt, unless contraries happen to be equally clear; but what then? "What I necessarily believe to exist must have some external existence;" but if two beings happen to disagree in their "necessary beliefs," which is right? Against the necessary beliefs, the intuitive certainties, in so far as they relate to the nature of things, critical and skeptical thought has always been present to raise objection. But there was needed the systematic development of a metaphysic that pretended to demonstrate everything from *a priori* principles. This system made possible the rise of an equally vigorous and developed doubt.

The second great constructive method in the philosophy of nature is the English empirical method. Conscious that its aims appear to those of the opposite party to be not even philosophic at all, this method is content with its reputation for progressiveness, exactitude, trustworthiness, and is willing to plod slowly, and to master nature by degrees. "*Principia*" are all that it can hope to reach; and these *principia* are not absolute truths that commend themselves by their internal evidence, but generalizations from experience, wide, but not nearly or remotely exhaustive. "Natural philosophy" is no completed system, but an infinitely extended field of work, to be conquered piece by piece, while the results appear in endless series of "philosophical transactions." The method of experience is the method of submission. Man is the "minister and interpreter of nature." The method of Descartes had not altogether neglected experience; far from it. But thought is for the Cartesian not the minister and interpreter of the world so much as the petitioner who demands of the world that it shall comply with his desires. Thought needs clearness and evidence; therefore must the world be simple and full of discoverable necessity. To be sure, Descartes' tone, when he writes, is very moderate, even humble, with the humility of a dignified and triumphant thinker who can afford to appear modest. Yet the overwhelming force of the system-making motive seems quite plain when one considers the arguments by whose aid Descartes sets aside the doubt universal with which he had begun. It is hardly as a doubter that Descartes made his lasting contribution to philosophy.

The method of experience, on the other hand, is cautious and self-distrustful. It can not satisfy some of the most earnest demands of thought; yet that fact troubles it very little. It undertakes to do only what can safely be done; it is not concerned when thought asks more than the world is willing to offer. Yet if it can claim to be less extravagant in its demands than is the opposing method, the method of experience is open to the great objection that it is still not safe from skeptical assaults; in fact, as Hume once for all showed, this method, if pursued consistently to its last consequences, would be nothing more or less than absolute skepticism. So far from solving important problems about nature, pure experience, free from all *a priori* assumptions, would not recognize any nature as existent at all. For what is pure experience other than the individual experience? How transcend this series of mental states called "I" to make any assertion about a world beyond? Minister and interpreter—of what? Before such questions, implied as they are in the skepticism of Hume, the experience-philosophy is powerless, unless indeed it is willing to forsake its own principles, and to assume as true what is not justified by experience.

Thus then the philosophy of nature before Kant was divided between the two parties, each hopelessly involved in difficulty. The one sought inner contentment, the other agreement with an external authority. Yet neither could quite ignore the ideal of the other. The Rationalist took his material from experience; the Empiricist dealt with experience according to the forms of thought. And neither could escape the assaults of the skeptic. The Rationalist could not construct experience; the Empiricist could not give it philosophic significance. For the one, his "necessary truths" remained often without application to the data of sense. For the other, his "facts" contained no element of necessity. Neither would admit his deplorable position; and notwithstanding many efforts, the position of the two great parties, the aspect of the whole controversy was for the first time materially altered by the Kantian *Kritik*.

"Necessary truth must be found if there is to be a philosophy. And mere experience furnishes no necessary truths." "Unless

experience bears out an assertion, that assertion is either empty or false. And an *a priori* proposition tries to assert something that experience has not yet fully borne out, or else something that transcends all possible experience. In either case how is an *a priori* truth possible?" These are the two arguments addressed by Kant to the opposing parties in this contest. The first shows the failure of pure empiricism, the second the failure of pure rationalism. In various wordings these arguments appear in numerous passages of the *Kritik*. Their sense stated in our own terms is this: Rationalism, the assertion that reason is competent to reveal the laws of the universe, is met by the fact that if there is a real independent universe, our thought as our thought can have no real control over this universe. Things will go their courses caring little what is thought of them. Why should their ways be as our ways, or their laws like our thoughts? Descartes' argument from the goodness of the Deity, who, as Descartes said, can not wish to deceive his creatures, is an obvious begging of the question. We have the conception of a Deity. How is that conception known to have objective validity, unless we already have some rational inner criterion of the validity of thought? If we have no such criterion, our thought remains where it is, shut up to itself, and there is no use of introducing the notion of a truthful Deity, unless we have already proven his existence. And again, if there is a Deity, how do we know that part of the all-wise plan may not be the necessary failure of human thought to understand the universe? Moths are deceived about candles, why not our minds about what we take to be absolute truth? And so the foundations of rationalism are cut away by skepticism.

But, on the other hand, what can experience tell us of the world? Pure experience is absolutely shut up within its own sphere. Pure experience knows a succession of facts, *p, q, r, s, t, u, v*, etc. These it can compare and classify. What more? Can any number of these facts give us any information about what is beyond their own series? Experience left to itself is a man stumbling about in the dark in a forest. He knows that he has run against so many trees, fallen down several banks, become entangled in bushes so and so many times. But whether his next few steps are to bring him to a tree, or to a swamp, or to

a precipice, or into an open place, these past experiences can not reveal. Take the sum of all recorded experience, analyze and compare its *data* as you will, there remains at last no possibility of ever advancing one step beyond, of gaining one atom of information about any fact not yet experienced, unless you make an assumption transcending experience, and unprovable thereby; *i. e.*, unless you return to rationalism. There is nothing necessary in pure experience as pure experience; and the needs of thought are satisfied by nothing less than necessary results. Therefore a purely empirical philosophy of nature is impossible.

These two arguments are here given in other than Kantian words, but they stand at the very entrance of the dwelling of critical philosophy. Both the arguments ignore the methods of the inexact thought of common life, yet they do not contradict that thought. The skepticism in question is not a practical skepticism; it is a purely theoretic questioning of the foundations of all thought. What justification can thought make of its own claims? Whence and how comes the element of necessity into our beliefs? Is this supposed necessity merely a phenomenon of emotion, or can it be logically justified? How are synthetic (*i. e.*, constructive, satisfying, information-giving) judgments possible, that transcend experience, or that are, in technical language, *a priori*? How can we know more than simply a list of *data* of experience? How can we know that all this imagined and conceived world, its space, its time, its unalterable law, its solar systems, its countless conscious beings, is in any important respect in the least like anything that really exists outside the experience of those that conceive it? How is the Philosophy of Nature possible? To those whose minds never grasp the real need of questions like these, the critical philosophy seems insignificant or irreverent. But it ought to be remembered that such minds have little in common with truly advanced modern thought, but live in the thought-world of previous centuries. Modern thought is much more than Kant; but it is not modern without Kant.

Kant's critical answer to these questions is not to be stated in full within such limits as the present; but neither is our pur-

pose the making of a complete statement. Let us indicate the spirit of the critical answer.

Thought is shut up within itself, and can never grasp the things in themselves. But, then, is the real purpose of thought the mastery over things in themselves? Let us examine the nature of our knowledge to see what the purpose of our thinking really is. There are sciences in existence that pretend to have a very satisfactory mastery over their subject-matter. Geometry knows many things about necessary space-relations. Arithmetic is sure of the abiding truth of many propositions about number. But in what sense is it pretended that the mathematical sciences give us a knowledge of necessary truth? Geometry does not deal with things that lie outside of all possible experience. Number is not a mysterious entity, behind all phenomenal things that are numbered. But space and number exist in and for intuition and experience. Space and number relations, when they are not given in actual intuition, are yet conceivably verifiable by possible intuition, *i. e.*, by actual sight of the objects in question. The necessity claimed for geometry and arithmetic is a necessity for human consciousness. The truth of these sciences is a truth that may be presented directly; that may be given in a single *datum*, or in a longer or shorter series of *data*. There is in these sciences no effort to find out about things that lie beyond or behind all conceivable experience.

But the Rationalists have made the attempt to found philosophy on assertions about what transcends all possible experience. In the effort to reach systematic perfection and tranquillity of thought, they have been led to seek a foundation absolutely outside and independent of thought. Their method is thus brought into sharp contrast with the method of the exact sciences. How can they justify this contrast? The answer can only be found in a discussion of the exact sciences themselves, with the end to determine how they are possible as trustworthy systems of necessary truth. Knowing how necessity is secured in one province, we may hope to see how necessity may be secured in the universal field claimed by philosophy.

The undertaking of the *Kritik* is thus outlined. We begin

with the great problem, How shall the extravagances of rationalism, the self-destructive moderation of empiricism, be corrected and reconciled with the purposes of thought and with the capacities of the human mind? Our first appeal for aid is made to the already established sciences. They have well-known methods, make definite claims, and win general acceptance. We ask, then, what kind of truth do they reveal, and how do they reveal it? How are the *a priori* and the empirical combined and reconciled in them? If we comprehend this revelation of the nature of human thought, we shall have mastered the essential preliminaries to the solution of our problem. The same combination of elements that produces truth in the particular case may be expected to produce it in the general case.

Now what, in any science already established, constitutes its necessity? Two things. The exact sciences deal with some department of human experience, and therefore with perceptions or presentations (*Anschauungen*). The exact sciences make assertions about these *data*, group them together under certain general notions (*Begriffe*), and assert the necessary objective validity of certain of these groupings. The knowability of the general forms of perception, the assurance of the necessary validity of certain general notions, these two things are therefore essential to the constitution of science as a system of necessary truths.

To speak especially of the first condition: When perceptions are presented to us they always appear in some form, viz., either in space or in time. Now to know any general truth about the relations of these perceptions to one another, or about the relations of the parts of one perception among themselves, we must know what in these relations is purely accidental, and what is essential to the form in which the given perceptions appear. A straight line is perceived, and its property of being the shortest way between its extremities is also perceived. Is this property merely an accidental accompaniment of the straightness of the line? Or must this property be found wherever straightness is found in lines? The answer is clearly this: If the union of these two properties is merely accidental, then the form, the general nature of our power to perceive space, is such as to ad-

mit of straight lines that are not the shortest distances between their own extremities. But if the nature of our space-perception is such as to preclude the possibility of such a separation of the two properties in question, then we can only say that so long as we retain our present space-perceiving powers we shall see such straight lines, and such only, as are the shortest ways between any two points on their own extent. Just so, if the impossibility of making *facta* into *infecta*, of causing past deeds to become undone, is the result of the nature of our time perception, this impossibility is for us beyond removal so long as we have our present time-perception. And so one might go on. The sum of all the instances is this: The first necessary element is introduced into science by the fact that, as we are beings perceiving in certain fashions or forms, and in those only, the nature of our perceptions must be determined by the nature of our power to perceive, and a limit must be set to the possibilities of experience, a fixed and determinate set of conditions must be introduced into our world, through these limitations of our perceiving faculty. On the other hand, however, coming to the second condition of science, if we try to think of any extended series of experiences as a whole, if we try to group them into general ideas, if we try to explain them, we are obliged to react upon these experiences, not merely to receive them passively. But our result in this case must depend upon the nature of our thinking powers, just as the *data* of perception must conform to the nature of our perceiving powers. The ultimate forms of thought must be necessary determining elements in our conception of the universe. If to think our experience as a whole and as an objective reality requires that we shall conceive of a world of substances, a world in which events are casually connected, then in thinking our experience we shall be forced to assume the permanence of substance, the universality of casual connection. And thus by the very act of thinking we shall be led and bound to a theory of experience wherein certain ideas that never could be realized in experience apart from thought are interwoven. What can we affirm of the world of experience so conceived? We can affirm that in it certain laws are of universal and necessary validity. These laws are the ones that our own thought introduces. So long

as we think after our present fashion, so long must phenomena be grouped by our thought in certain ways. To change the fundamental laws of nature, you must alter the forms of our thought. To ask how these laws might be changed is merely to ask how our thought might be altered altogether, so that it should no longer be recognizable. Such a question has no significance. It is to ask what we should be were we not ourselves, nor like ourselves, but wholly other.

Here, then, we have found in two directions sources of necessary truth. Our perception has a certain definite nature (for do we not mean something very definite by the verb "to perceive?"), and our thought likewise is not a merely formless activity. Both of these, the perception and the thought, must determine for us our world. And the necessary elements of experience must result from and express the nature of these two constant factors of all knowledge.

Now, in the exact sciences, the necessity that exists is made possible by this union of the *a priori* elements with the crude *data* of sense. But notice that the resulting necessary truth is not a truth transcending experience. We do not know, as Descartes had imagined us to know, that what we think holds true beyond our consciousness and for things in themselves. But this we know, that in experience certain general relations will be observed, because this experience, by hypothesis, is to be our experience, perceived by our sense, conceived by our thought. The necessity known is not that of the Rationalist, a transcendent necessity; the experience known is not merely that of the Empiricist, a rhapsody of independent *data*. We know an immanent necessity, an experience wherein there is an *a priori* element. What results from the nature of consciousness has no meaning apart from the *data* of experience; and these *data* are unknowable, except in the forms that the nature of consciousness determines.

If the exact sciences have this foundation, has the philosophy of nature any prospect of finding for itself any other foundation? Kant's answer is negative. The ultimate fact of thought is the union of two elements to make up knowledge. These elements are the material and the formal. The purely material has no law, no necessity apart from the formal; the

formal element is furnished by the nature of consciousness. Our world is what it is, because we think it after such and such a fashion. Yet, in our thinking, we can not create the material of our thought. The *data* come to us. We put them into form. The formal element therefore, without the material, would be a mere blank. But the material, without the formal, would be a mere chaos. And so this relation of thought and sense, which in the exact sciences is the source of all their necessity, this same relation must be the source of all the necessity that philosophy can hope to possess. Of a world in itself, apart from our thought, apart from our consciousness, we have no shadow of knowledge; unless, indeed, we may be said to know quite negatively that to another sort of mind than our own, the world would doubtless appear quite different. The merely negative idea of a world in itself, of the object of a totally different consciousness from our own, remains to take the place of the old rationalistic dreams. For the rest, we have a sure foundation for all positive and useful ideas and beliefs in the living world of experience. Here we are sure of necessary truth; here the skeptical doubt may be silenced, and exact results may be sought and reached.

It follows that every effort to cross the boundary thus set by the nature of our consciousness will result in fantastic and groundless speculation, or else in open self-contradiction. In the *Transcendental Dialektik*, Kant seeks to justify this position by a special study of the possible ways in which the restless human reason may and indeed must seek to make conquests in the world beyond consciousness. This division of the *Kritik* is a series of stately obituaries, wherein are celebrated the virtues and the labors of several rationalistic theories, and wherein, too, their downfall and death is elaborately narrated by the man that himself slew more than one of them with his own hand.

The spirit of the critical answer to the fundamental problem of the philosophy of nature has thus been indicated. We have not attempted to expound the critical philosophy, but our present purpose will be satisfied if we have suggested the character of this philosophy. It remains for us to consider very briefly the significance of the thought of Kant in our own day.

The history of the speculative systems from Fichte to the downfall of the Hegelian school does not lie within our present province. It is enough to say that the whole modern philosophic movement has been an effort to realize, to develop, to pass beyond this fundamental thought of Kant; the thought that the nature of Being is determined by the nature of Intelligence. With all their extravagances the speculative systems never wholly lost sight of Kant; and with the revival of more exact thinking in the so-called Neo-Kantian movement in Germany, the struggle to grasp and to perfect the critical idea in all its meaning and consequence began afresh in a spirit more like that of the patient and accurate natural sciences.

But to understand the present state of the controversy, a few words must be said of the origin of this so-called Neo-Kantian school. It would be a mistake to see in the growth of any thought movement nothing but the expression of purely logical needs; and in the general history of our time a brief sketch at least of the very manifold elements that have gone to make up this Neo-Kantian movement will no doubt some day be found. We can not undertake to analyze as an historian would do, for we never understand our contemporaries; but we can undertake to observe.

With the scattering of the Hegelian flock came a time when the public even in Germany lost interest in philosophy. There followed a long interregnum. There were, as one might say, judges in Israel, but no kings. We may well doubt whether the king has arisen since at all. Perhaps for the rest of the century we shall do better without him; yet some day no doubt he will come, the man of wisdom, and command the thoughts of his time, gathering up our multitudinous threads, that the ways through our labyrinths may be found. But in the years from 1840 to 1860, what there was of philosophy took for the most part the form of fruitless efforts towards new systems, or of historical research, so that little of original and enduring worth has come to us from that time. One man there was, however, whose influence, long invisible, and never very direct, had in the end much to do with the shaping of subsequent thought. This man was Arthur Schopenhauer, who began his

career early in the century, and yet at the middle of it was still unknown. Founding himself, as he asserted and supposed, directly upon Kant, Schopenhauer published in 1819 a system of philosophy under the title "*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung.*" He himself had by nature something of the poet in him, much of the speculative genius, a liking for some of the more exact sciences, and a melancholy disposition. By early training he was a man of the world; by later choice a recluse. For many years he found no readers; his disgust with the world, and especially with his age, increased, and he decided to appeal to posterity, giving up all hope of present fame. Meanwhile, to pass away the time, or to express the new results of his meditations, he published (but did not succeed in widely circulating) now philosophical essays and now elaborate indictments against Hegelians, materialists, women, professors of philosophy, and his reviewers, to all of whom he owed, as it seems, not a few grudges for past injuries. After the year 1850 his life grew a little more cheerful as a small school of disciples began to gather around him. He died in 1860, and not long afterwards was a noted man. His fame very soon reached such proportions that his disciples could afford to quarrel in print as to whether one or another of them had appreciated him better, while professors began to refute him, and men of letters to read his works. These works were praised as models of style. An anonymous writer in *Unsere Zeit* wrote a short account of the philosopher shortly after his death, and advised every one to read his books, if only for the effect, which was compared to that of Beethoven's symphonies. Novelists, poets, essayists, everybody not by profession a philosopher, fell to admiring Schopenhauer. And so his influence, if not very definite, was soon very great. Nor has it to-day much decreased. Now Schopenhauer is especially urgent in his demand that one who wants to study philosophy must master the *Kritik*. He will have none of those post-Kantian speculators, upon whom he showers torrents of abuse. And so to the general public his influence acted as a cloud-dispersing power, to drive out of sight all (except himself) that obscured the original critical thought, and to direct attention to the master and to the original sources. To be sure,

Schopenhauer is not a satisfactory expositor of the critical thought, nor is his own development of it destined to be in most respects a very enduring product of speculation; but as a factor in modern thought his fluently written and widely read essays have been of great importance in leading, especially the younger students of philosophy, to look for themselves into this Kant, for whom so much was claimed.

But beside this more popular influence, other causes were at work to bring the thought of the age back to the problems of the *Kritik*. After a short period in which materialism pure and simple appeared about to win the favor of scientific men, as the expression of truly philosophic thought, there came a time, after the year 1860, when general attention was once more directed to psychological problems. Physiological psychology began to assume form. In Germany the researches of Helmholtz and of others, led to controversy concerning the origin and nature of our perception of space. In England the "First Principles" of Mr. Spencer, the "Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy," by Mill, aroused a number of old philosophical discussions. Science, it was evident, could not rest content in its own province. There was unrest, there was the old metaphysical craving felt, so often as men undertook to be in earnest with their problems. In Germany, the questions thus revived were in general discussed with more enlightenment, because the key to modern metaphysical problems, the Kantian *Kritik*, was there, in some sort at least, an open book, while in England, it was for most people hidden beneath who knows how many tons of mistranslations, misinterpretations, garbled reports, satires, warnings, refutations, even sermons. But in Germany, too, the movement was much impeded. There was felt the need of a philological understanding of Kant; there was felt also the weight of traditional false impressions about Kant. Philosophy and science were to be in some way harmonized, thought many; and for such the *Kritik* was a storehouse of suggestion, whence one took what one needed, throwing aside what did not suit. Such is the fashion of men like Helmholtz. The Kantian philosophy was to be revived, thought others, and such set themselves to the task of reconstructing and expounding the whole body of the *Kritik*. Such

work as this was attempted by Herman Cohen in his book, "*Kant's Theorie der Erfahrung.*" To others the new movement meant the effort to build beyond Kant, by criticising the *Kritik*, by understanding Kant "*besser als er sich selbst verstand,*" if one may use certain often quoted words of Kant himself. Such men have sought, like Lange, in his "*Geschichte des Materialismus,*" to make an historical synthesis of critical philosophy and of exact science, or, like Laas, in his "*Kant's Analogien,*" to found their own views on an examination of the particular problems of the *Kritik*, or, like Karl Göring, in his "*System der Kritischen Philosophie,*" to build afresh, on a different basis, a philosophy that should be critical, but only more remotely Kantian. Every grade of conscious dependence or independence, every way of dealing with Kant, by philological investigation, by free criticism, by open warfare, by eclectic combination of Kant with something not Kant, by synthesis of Kant and of more modern thought, every mood of the philosophic spirit, skeptical, submissive, constructive, dogmatic, all these are represented in the new movement, and all bear witness to Kant's power, and to the need of him, as the comparison of all beautiful bays to the bay of Naples, or of all virtuous statesmen to Washington, bears witness to the pre-eminence of these objects of esteem over all others of their class. Yet of course in the war of opinions, in the chaos of warring books, there is still a great deal to prevent the formation of a clear and decided public opinion. There is much yet to be done before the "return to Kant" will have made a definite and enduring impression even on the thought of Germany, and much more to be done before the force, the need, and the significance of the whole movement can be made clear to any large English-speaking public.

In England, however, there is an independent movement that tends more or less in the same direction. The new Hegelianism of Oxford and of Scotland has directed attention to Kant as to the sower whose harvest has been "*aufgehoben*" into the barns of the reaper Hegel. Without any desire to be content with Kant, with severe words for what seem to him the errors of Kant, Mr. Stirling, author of "*The Secret of Hegel,*" has exhibited a wonderful knowledge of the whole critical philosophy,

has used the odd picturesque style of exposition that he imitated from Carlyle, and thus, in several essays bearing on the subject, has made the study of Kant perhaps no easier to anybody, but doubtless more imposing, not to say more fruitful, to many. Principal Caird has written a book called the "Philosophy of Kant," to which those that will learn much besides what is in the *Kritik* and by no means all that is therein, may betake themselves. And space will not permit any mention, much less any discussion of the numerous essays that have resulted from another and quite different source and spirit, and that have been published by members of the University of Dublin, from Mr. Mahaffey down.

But in England too the expositors and critical essayists are not the only ones to show interest in Kant. There are the builders also, to whom Kant is a master and in some ways a guide, though they will not be altogether dependent upon him. Of such is Mr. Shadworth Hodgson, whose "Philosophy of Reflection" has been called, by a critic that was not over-friendly, "the most serious speculative effort of our time." And as to the men who are accustomed to speak slightly of Kant, are not all their most important philosophic conceptions so saturated with the Kantian spirit that were that element to be removed they themselves would not easily recognize their own thought?

In fine, we are not yet beyond the influence of the *Kritik*, and in all probability we never shall be. The philosophy of the future must be the critical philosophy. But on the other hand it would be absurd to suppose that we shall ever return to the position of the earlier crude followers of Kant, or to the precise views of Kant himself. Critical progress in thought often, yes, constantly looks back; it never goes back. It knows of masters; but they are masters of learning, not of slaves. They teach us what in time we shall do better than they; they do not command us and leave us no choice but obedience. The critical philosophy was suggested by one man; to develop it, to free it from inner contradictions and from extraneous elements, to discover its full significance, to apply it to new problems, to elevate it from a criticism of fundamental notions to a Philosophy of Nature, will doubtless be the work of ages. It is not

strange or lamentable that in this jubilee year of the *Kritik*, at the end of this first century of its life in the world, men are still disputing over its doctrines and even over its words. No doubt at the end of the second century, in 1981, the strife, vastly more complex and interesting, far deeper in significance, far better known among men, embracing new topics not now dreamed of, engaging minds better trained than any now on earth, yet the same strife still, will be going on, and much the same interest will attach to the book of the obscure Königsberg professor. For great philosophic works, though they make the fortunes of no publisher, are wealth still to all civilized mankind centuries after their authors are dead.

And if one asks, What is the moral worth of all this critical philosophy? What does this exercise of mind do towards bettering men and increasing the civilization of the world? then we answer: All philosophic reflection is good if it is but earnest. For in this reflection the spirit of man seeks itself, that it may be no longer a stranger to what is in it and about it. But the critical philosophy, as the latest and highest phase of reflection, is especially worthy of praise, because it shows us how in our conscious life itself is contained the germ of all that is significant in our world. Only because our thought determines so and so, only because our will acts with such and such ends in view, only because our life as moral beings is what it is, can we be said to live in a world and not in a chaos, or to find in this world anything that is worthy of effort or of service or of worship. This thought, that truth and right alike are possible only through spontaneous activity from within, not through any conceivable influence alone from without; that what is, is for consciousness and for thought, and is not apart from these; this great thought we find not only in germ but also in vigorous growth in the philosophy of Kant.

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