

quotations from Spencer's *Social Statics* or from Bagehot's *Physics and Politics*, that there is a transition from the anarchy of early ages through a period of authority, of law, of complex regulation, to a state of freedom. Perfect freedom, of course, only exists as an ideal limit, but a state of perfect freedom is conceivable in which law has disappeared except so far as it has become organic in the individual, and the description of such a state has a superficial resemblance to a description of "the state of nature".

All this goes to show that the apparent resemblance of the theory of Mind-stuff to the half-poetical, half-philosophical views of early speculators must be regarded as an argument in its favour, since this resemblance is a proof that the theory belongs to the last stage of thought that can at present be imagined. Those early speculators who have just been referred to had really the advantage of not being too much oppressed with the material of thought, and were therefore able to give a sort of answer to the most general questions that can present themselves. But the answers they gave did not satisfy those who afterwards studied nature in its complexity as a group of objective phenomena. It was necessary that the results of scientific investigation should become organic in thought before such problems as that of the thing-in-itself could again present themselves clearly. In the meantime there was a movement away from metaphysics. Then at length it became possible to think out from the point of view of self-consciousness a theory that should be really metaphysical and not an attempt to substitute science for metaphysics, but in which at the same time the results of scientific study should be implicit. Clifford's theory has the characters just described; and it has also the character that belongs to every final intellectual product, of appearing perfectly simple when it has once taken distinct form.

T. WHITTAKER.

V.—HEGEL: AN EXPOSITION AND CRITICISM.

HEGEL has been brought nearer to the English mind in many ways since Dr. Stirling divulged his "Secret" to an incurious public sixteen years ago. From Oxford and from Glasgow there has issued a succession of books dealing with metaphysical, ethical, and religious problems from a Hegelian standpoint, and directly or indirectly expounding Hegelian ideas.¹ There are

¹ It is only necessary to refer to Professor Green's *Hume* and Professor Caird's *Philosophy of Kant*, to Mr. F. H. Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, Principal

signs of the leavening influence of these conceptions in other quarters. The interest evinced by critics like Mr. Sidgwick and Mr. A. J. Balfour in the new interpretations of Kant and in the whole movement to which they apply the name of Transcendentalism or Neo-Kantianism may fairly be instanced. But in spite of all this it cannot be denied that there still prevails a vast deal of misconception about Hegel, and what he professes to do for us. There is still a haze of mystery about his name; and the evil is increased, in the opinion of the present writer, by the false humility with which it is often the fashion to speak of him in friendly quarters. His followers are too fond of representing themselves as merely picking up crumbs at the banquet; most of them profess merely to guess at the mind of the Master without venturing to compass his thoughts. This has an evil effect in scaring away the uninitiated, and the frame of mind is in itself not altogether healthy. Hegel is not infallible, and he must, in the end, be known and judged as other men are.

Probably, however, still more mischief is done by the current idea of Hegelianism as an '*a priori*' system which neither begins nor ends in experience, and which, if taken at all, must be swallowed whole. Hegel's immediate followers in Germany did much to countenance this notion, insisting, as is usual in such cases, on the mint, anise and cummin, to the detriment of the weightier matters of the law. The reaction which has overtaken Hegelianism in the land of its birth is due, among other causes, to the impression thus created, that the substantial truth of its conception of the universe stood or fell with its infallibility as a system. It would be a mistake to over-estimate that reaction, for, in many respects, Hegelianism died only as a seed dies, when committed to the earth. "The fewest of those who are influenced by Hegel's spirit are themselves aware of it," says an outsider like Von Hartmann; "it has become the common heritage of the most cultured circles of the German people."¹ But if Englishmen are to reap the full benefit of Hegel's thought, it is important that his expounders should aim at greater freedom of treatment. The dialectic armour must be worn more loosely, if it is not to hamper them. When they succeed in this, they will also succeed in making plain that Hegelianism has no other basis than things as they are. Neither in his premisses nor in his conclusions does Hegel transcend experience; and when all

Caird's *Philosophy of Religion*, and, in the way of direct exposition, Mr. Wallace's *Logic of Hegel*. Professor Adamson's compact sketch, *On the Philosophy of Kant*, may, without injustice, be added to the list.

¹ *Vermischte Aufsätze*, p. 568.

is said, it is the essential soberness and practicalness of his system that is its greatest recommendation.

The aim of the present sketch is partly expository, partly critical. An attempt has been made at first hand to set the different parts of the system in their true light, and, to some extent, to estimate their value. An exposition and criticism must always be more technical than a piece of independent reasoning need be; and in the present instance the necessity of conciseness in a review of Hegel's general position has sometimes made the treatment more abrupt than is desirable in the case of unfamiliar conceptions. But this will not, I hope, be found to obscure the general view of the Hegelian philosophy, and of philosophy in general, which forms the basis of this essay.

It has been well remarked by Dr. Stirling, that Hegel, by burning his bridges behind him, has wantonly increased the difficulty of his system. Its appearance of utter insulation and the strange underivedness of its beginning prevent us at first from seeing its origin in the achievements of his immediate predecessors. This is perhaps to be accounted for by the fact that Hegel, as a matter of individual history, did not reach his fundamental conception of the universe along the lines of Kant and Fichte. He worked his way to it by the aid of the Greek spirit on the one hand, and by a profound study of the main religious ideas of Christianity on the other. The result of his solitary meditations was afterwards, one might say, poured into the mould of the Kantio-Schellingian philosophy, and took its place as the last term and summation of that development. But this can hardly excuse the almost disingenuous tone which Dr. Stirling remarks in some of his references to Kant. The very persistence of his polemic against Kant betrays the extent of his debt. That debt was in some respects more to Kant directly, than to Kant through Fichte and Schelling; for in his retirement at Frankfort Hegel had already reached his own doctrine of the Absolute as (in the first instance) a chain of thought-determinations, before Schelling gave his Philosophy of Identity to the world. The doctrine that the Absolute is Thought was, for Hegel, the direct result of his study of Kant.

Kant set out to find the necessary limits of our intelligence, but he naturally found it impossible to determine these limits without an analysis of the conceptions which form the structure of knowledge as knowledge. This investigation resulted in the discovery of the categories and of their supreme condition, the unity of apperception. Fichte, followed by Schelling, laid hold of Kant's unity of apperception and elevated it to a metaphysical principle as the Absolute Ego, or simply as the Absolute. In so doing they forgot—or at least temporarily ignored the

fact—that the *Critique* was essentially a theory of *knowledge*, and that this transcendental Unity was only “the vehicle”¹ of the conceptions, and consequently a mere empty form without its rational content. To this neglect I think we may trace Schelling’s *Neutrum* and the transcendent predicateless Being at which Fichte finally arrived. Self-consciousness, Kant says,² is only “the reference to itself as Subject—the form of thought,” and consequently self-consciousness, apart from thought, is, naturally, “an expression quite empty of content”. It is here that Hegel takes Kant up. He fastens on what is really the core of the *Critique*, but which, up to that time, had been comparatively neglected—the Deduction of the Categories. It is as if he had said, ‘Let us abstract a little from the *form* of thought. A thinker can be known only through his thoughts; let us see, therefore, what these thoughts are. Let us examine the nature of thought itself, and if self-consciousness is the necessary form of thought, we shall be able to exhibit that form as the result of thought’s own nature. Putting the question more narrowly, let us examine the mutual relations of the categories which Kant offers us as constitutive of experience.’

Hegel often blames Kant for undertaking his critique of knowledge solely in a transcendental interest, *i.e.*, solely with reference to the question whether the categories are subjective or objective in their origin. He accuses such a criticism of failing to enter upon the content of these thought-determinations, and their exact relation to one another. And in point of fact, if Kant’s design be considered, the results he reached as to the structure of knowledge were, in a manner, accidental to his main inquiry and gleaned by the way. Kant’s standpoint, however, involves, according to Hegel, an impossible question. Thought cannot criticise its own ultimate nature; it simply is what it is. The conceptions which form the body of thought constitute my nature as a thinker: they equally constitute the nature or framework of things. The idea of another Nature behind the one we know is a fiction without foundation. “Thoughts do not stand between us and things, shutting us off from the things; they rather shut us together with them.”³ An objective and disinterested investigation of the nature of thought as it is in itself, is therefore the only possible metaphysic. Logic and Metaphysic coincide, for in analysing the structure of reason—the build of its conceptions—we are analysing, according to Hegel, the essence of God and the thoughts He has embodied in Nature. What Hegel presents us with in the *Wissenschaft der Logik* is an

¹ Kant, *Werke* III. 274 (ed. Hartenstein). ² *Ibid.*, p. 281 n.

³ Hegel, *Werke* III., 17.

exposition of the uncoloured and simple essence of that whose nature it is to exist as Spirit and to view itself in things.

To the treatment of Kant's meagre table he brought a mind steeped in Greek philosophy. The subtle dialectic with which Plato treats such conceptions as limit and the unlimited, being and non-being, the one and the many, sameness and difference, had early fascinated him. The example of Plato, acting upon Kant's hint that the third category is the union of the other two, first prompted perhaps the attempt to introduce fluidity into the conceptions which we ordinarily use as hard and fast counters of thought. If we add the dominating influence of Aristotle's metaphysical formulae, we have the main factors of the Hegelian logic. His obligations to Fichte, however, are not to be forgotten. It was Fichte who first elevated the triplicity which Kant stumbled upon in the categories into an absolute principle of method. The thesis, antithesis and synthesis of the *Wissenschaftslehre* are the notion, the negation of the notion, and the negation of the negation which meet us in the *Logik*. Secondly Fichte's insistence on the supreme right of the Subject, after being in abeyance in Schelling, reappears in Hegel, who sums up all existence in the Absolute Spirit. And, thirdly, he also owes to Fichte the idea of *system*. What was set up in the *Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre* as an ideal, it is the boast of the *Logik* to be: "an absolute totality returning upon its starting-point, in which one thing leads to all, and all things to one".¹ The adequate scientific account of a conception according to Fichte is simply the determination of its place in the system—the showing what preceding notion determines that place, and what further notion has its place determined by the notion in question.² And in the *Sonnenklarer Bericht* he says:—"My exposition sets out, as every scientific exposition should, with the most perfectly undetermined, and determines this further before the eyes of the reader."³ The words are an exact description of Hegel's method in the *Logik*.

Opposition and identity in that opposition is the formula exemplified in the development of every conception and the method by which we pass from the one to the other. Each is shown to be the prey of an immanent motion by which it glides into its opposite. The conceptions viewed in this movement are notions, and the system of all notions is the Notion. Synthesis through antithesis, fuller position through opposition, affirmation by negation may be said indifferently to characterise this method. Perhaps the last would best describe the nature of the dialectic progress. Hegel says himself in the Introduc-

¹ Fichte, *Werke* I., 59. ² *Ibid.*, I. 55. ³ *Ibid.*, II. 414.

tion to the larger *Logic*:—"The only means of gaining scientific advance is the knowledge of the logical proposition that the negative is as much positive as negative," since it is the negation of a definite thing. Determinate negation contains that which it negates, and therefore possesses a content, and indeed a richer content than the positive whose negation it is. This is the method which Hegel assures us that he "*knows* to be the only true one". His own application, he admits, may be imperfect and capable of much elaboration in detail; but the method is a dialectic inherent in the subject matter. It is the course of the object itself (*der Gang der Sache selbst*). The Notion determines itself; we look on, and observe "the necessity of the connexion and the immanent origin of differences."¹

The method has been from the beginning the boast of friends and the scoff of enemies. What have we to say to it in view of statements like the above? Plainly the first thing is to admit unreservedly the value of the light thrown on the function of the negative. It is at once the most natural and the most fruitful way of considering a conception, to note the subtle affinities and insensible transitions by which it is linked to its opposite. The thoroughgoing application of this mode of analysing thoughts to the whole range of our general conceptions—its elevation in fact to a method—could not fail to produce rich results in the hands of a metaphysician like Hegel. We find accordingly, imbedded all through the *Logic*, passages of the most precious metaphysical analysis; and the ghosts of many an old controversy are laid when the light is let in on the innate dialectic of thought and things. Conceptions, among which ordinary, and even scientific, thought stumbles helplessly, are dissected to the last fibre of their chameleon-like nature, and from henceforth we master our conceptions instead of being mastered by them. It cannot, therefore, be denied that the dialectic method followed in the *Logic* is founded on the nature of thought, or, as it is expressed, is immanent in the notions themselves and not a subjective importation into them. And in the end this is no more than saying that no conception stands by itself, but all are linked subtly to one another. Thought is infinitely fluid, and makes no distinction which it does not again dissolve. Hegel is only making universal a principle, which, in its more obvious aspects, had engaged the attention of other thinkers, notably of Plato and of Kant.

But when all this is said, there can be no doubt that much unnecessary fuss and mystery has been made about the method. We are told to sink our subjectivity, and watch the necessary

¹ Cf. Hegel, *Works* III., pp. 41-3.

evolutions of the Notion. But it is in vain that we are asked sometimes to believe that the whole chain would unwind itself before the eyes of any man who, with steadiness and sharpness enough of intellectual vision, took up in a spirit of faith the link of "Being". The *Logic* is like the temple of Solomon: no tool of iron was heard in the house while it was in building, but the stone, we read, was "made ready before it was brought thither". The materials for the edifice have been brought from all quarters of the world. Hegel's thorough knowledge of history and of philosophers ancient and modern, his acquaintance with science, his profound appreciation of the conceptions of religion, and his splendid powers of metaphysical criticism are all fused in the prodigious toil of the *Logic*. It is without doubt the most wonderful piece of dove-tailing ever accomplished by human ingenuity. The expression used—dove-tailing—does not imply that the connexions established are arbitrary. We may admit that, in a number of cases they are forced; still in the main this is not so. But the word does imply that what is good in the *Logic* is the result of honest human labour, guided, it is true, by a fruitful thought, but not superseded by a magical and all-compelling method. And like all human work it is approximative in character and capable of indefinite rectification and amplification in detail. This is contained in Hegel's own admission quoted above, as well as in the improvements and transpositions made at different times both by himself and his followers. To assert anything else would be to claim inspiration for the system as the perfect, adequate and systematic transcript of the whole contents of human reason. And that is a claim which will hardly be pressed at the present day.

There is no need here—indeed it would be impossible—to begin with the ultimate abstraction of "Being" and give a list of the categories in which the *Logic* develops itself. That gives no idea of the value of the work, and may be found, besides, in the Histories of Philosophy. The value of the *Logic* lies not so much in the transitions themselves as in the way they are made—in the detail with which each conception is treated, and the changing lights by which it is illuminated. Not least valuable are the "Anmerkungen" or excursus, in which the dialectic of these abstract conceptions is seen in its concrete working—in philosophical systems, in mathematical and physical ideas, in morality and in religious thought. In particular no praise can be too high for his criticisms of Kant in this connexion.

There are still some misapprehensions, however, in regard to the *Logic*, which it may be worth our while to remove. Many criticisms of Hegel seem to father upon him the notion of a

thing-like existence of these pure thoughts prior to their existence in nature and in intelligence. Some critics even go further, and strain their imagination to conceive how in this "realm of shades" the more meagre conceptions give actual birth to the richer and higher. The absurdity of such views hardly needs to be demonstrated. Development, with Hegel, means no more than mutual implication. The dialectic method is as much analytic as synthetic; it is as much a finding of present differences as a generating of new ones. A first link of the chain is necessary in exposition, and we seem to begin with the absolutely simple and abstract. But neither in reality nor in thought is there such isolated simplicity and abstractness as we imagine to be the case here. "In reality we bring the *Begriff* and the whole nature of thought with us; and so we may very well say that every beginning must be made with the Absolute, just as all advance is only its exposition."¹ In fact, if the Notion be an organic whole, then it is impossible for the parts to exist before the whole; the whole and all its parts exist simultaneously. The system of notions is to be exhibited, further, as a development which finds its crown and completion in Spirit. Hegel lays great stress on the insight that the absolutely-true must be a result (and not a formless beginning, as with Schelling). But it is a result only in a sense in which it is at the same time the presupposition of the whole. The development is only ideal: thought *exists* only as spirit. The result is with equal right the first (or rather the only) existent, and the ground of the whole development.

One consequence of this is, that we cannot, in strictness, say that the result has been independently proved, because it has been reached in this fashion by the method. It was presupposed in the method all along. The formula which expresses the nature of the Absolute, and of which every conception (as well as every natural formation) is an instance, is originally a schema or abstract definition of conscious intelligence. The Absolute Idea is only the perfect form of the relation which is found at all times between a knower and his knowledge. It was there Hegel found his Absolute, and, in this sense, Hegelianism is a systematised anthropomorphism; it is content to dwell within a circle from which, in any case, there is no escaping. The identity of the human and the divine reason is certainly an immanent presupposition of the system, and not, in the ordinary sense, proved. Hegel knows only one Reason and one universe as the manifestation of that Reason. And the

¹ Hegel, *Works* V., 334. Compare the whole of that chapter on the Absolute Idea.

fact remains, that nobody knows any other, or, from the nature of the case, can have any data for postulating different kinds of reason or thought. The burden of proof lies not with Hegel but with his opponent. The notion of an "intelligible contingency,"¹ so common since Kant, *i.e.*, of possible distinct varieties of thought, is the mere whim of a speculation intoxicated with its own acuteness and freedom from prejudice. It is a cheap profundity that asks after every demonstration, 'But might it not all have been otherwise?' Of course it might; there is no *a priori* reason for existence being what it is. But philosophy deals with what is, and Hegel showed his good sense in disregarding such motiveless possibilities.

In what has gone before we have been nominally confined to the *Logic*, though much of what has been said applies to the whole system. But if our philosophy is not to remain abstract, an advance must be made from pure thought to the consideration of Nature and Spirit. The *Begriff* is the soul of both Nature and Spirit, and is the core of Hegel's philosophy; but it is as yet abstract thought—thought as it is in itself. In Nature we see thought as it exists outside of itself—objectivised; but the end is not reached till thought exists also for itself: it exists in and for itself only in the self-conscious intelligence. It is difficult at first sight to see the necessity of passing from the *Logic* to these other spheres; and indeed it may at once be confessed that the imagined dialectic, which drives thought out of itself, does not exist. Thought sums itself up in the Absolute Idea, which is defined as the unity of the Notion and its reality—as the pure Notion which has itself for its object. There seems no adequate reason for proceeding further; the definition appears to be the same as that of the Absolute Spirit, with which philosophy in general closes. We are told, however, that the Absolute Idea is confined to the element of pure thought and still logical. The objective contemplated is still merely the system of thought-determinations which constitute the *Logic*, and the Idea wants the richness of concrete life—the life of philosophy, of art, of religion and of the State—which is found in Absolute Spirit. But this determination of the merely logical nature of the Idea is only possible through the presupposition of an existent concrete—Nature and Spirit—from which it has been abstracted. We could not predict from the *Logic* that the Idea would manifest itself in Nature and Spirit, if we did not know from experience that it does so. Spirit, as has been seen, is presupposition as

¹ "Intelligible Zufälligkeit." This phrase is used by Lange in his *History of Materialism*.

well as result; and Hegel says himself: "Nature is the first in time, though the absolute *prius* is the Idea."¹

The transition from logic to the realm of nature has always been a favourite point with assailants of Hegelianism. This is partly owing to Hegel's own phraseology and the appearance of a *priori* deduction which he gives to everything he touches; partly to the misconceptions of others as to what his system, or philosophy in general, could yield them. Hegel's phrases are that the Idea "releases itself freely unto the externality of space and time; it resolves freely to release itself as nature out of itself". Now there need be no hesitation in saying, with Schelling, that these metaphorical phrases merely indicate a leap across "the ugly broad ditch" which dialectic is powerless to bridge. But it must be added that the ditch exists only if we suppose the system of logical conceptions existing factually as the *prius* of Nature. In reality the necessity for such a transition is purely factitious, because the notions never existed otherwise than in Nature and Spirit. They are the Absolute, because they form the common basis of Nature and Spirit, and their treatment apart was a merely ideal separation. They were got by abstraction from the concrete, not out of the air by any *a priori* method. We owe, therefore, no apology for a return to the reality from which we took them.

In the discussion of Nature a good deal of metaphorical language is used both by Hegel and by his followers. According to the phraseology given above, nature is usually described as objective thought—as the otherness or externalisation of thought. Hegel, after Schelling, speaks of nature as a petrified intelligence; and Dr. Stirling says that Hegel has demonstrated "all to be but a concretion of the notion".² Now in speaking of nature as the "other" or *alter ego* of thought there is implied a fundamental sameness with, at the same time, a difference. And a critic in hearing such phrases will doubtless ask, wherein consists the *alterity* of the Ego, what constitutes the "petrification," or "concretion," or "materiature," as Hegel is fond of calling it? In what do conceptions, viewed as in nature, differ from the same conceptions, viewed in the pure element of thought? The reply of the Hegelian will probably be that an otherness of some sort is implied in the very possibility of knowledge. Self-consciousness is the *datum* of philosophy as well as its goal; and it could not come to pass without the contrast of subject and object. But the difference is merely formal, while the identity is real; Aristotle, too, in ancient philosophy, recognised the truth that the thinker and his thoughts are in some sense the

¹ Hegel, *Works* VII, i., 32.

² *Secret of Hegel*, I. 177.

same. No reason can be given, however, why this objectivity should take the form of the perception of a world in space. That is simply a fact to be accepted ; and Hegel contents himself with showing that the attitude of intelligence towards this world is not ultimately different from the relation of a thinker to thoughts, which, by decipherment, he makes his own. The limpid clearness of this relation is interfered with in immediate perception by the character of the space-relations, which form the fundamental determination of nature. Space seems to introduce a pure separateness of things from thought ; and to it is due the appearance of petrification or concretion just referred to. But when it is recognised as being in reality the first intelligible bond by which things are connected one with another, it becomes the evidence of thought instead of its contradiction, and the apparent alienness of the world to intelligence disappears.

We must be contented with a general position here. Philosophy gives us only the ultimate terms of the explanation of nature. By showing the identity of the fundamental relations of nature with the conceptions of thought, she establishes the ultimate explicability of the whole in terms of these conceptions. This is, for Hegel, the identity of being and thought ; and his Idealism consists in his maintaining this identity as a necessary belief of reason, any other belief being in the end reducible to a self-contradiction. For the rest, it is not necessary to hold that Hegel's account exhausts the fact of perception. His account of nature is virtually an account of it in its spatial relations : of the qualitative aspect of nature revealed by the senses nothing is said. The mention of this may be resented as a relapse into an empirical way of thinking, seeing that these qualities depend upon our sensuous or animal nature. But then it must be remembered that the very fact of this animal existence is the point left unexplained.

If we press phrases, which seem to assert that Nature is, in any literal sense, nothing more than "the other" of the thought-determinations of the *Logic*, we are sure to end in paying ourselves with words. The same categories appear, it is true, but displaced, re-arranged and repeated in an infinite variety of ways, endlessly tangled. Of this displacement and of the multitude of particular relations to which it gives rise, and which constitute for us the face of nature, it is well to recognise that no account is given by Hegel, or, indeed, can be given by philosophy. Hegel himself probably took a more common-sense view of his position than he generally gets credit for. In reference to the phrase describing nature as a petrified intelligence, he explained, that, when more exactly expressed, it meant, as the ancients said, that *νοῦς* ruled the world, or that intelligence was in the

world as its immanent principle—the universal of nature, as the species is the universal of a particular animal.

It is impossible to dwell at length upon the Philosophy of Nature here. It may substantially be summed up in Hegel's own statement:—"Nature is to be regarded as a system of grades, the one of which proceeds necessarily from the other, and constitutes its proximate 'truth': not, however, in such a way that the one is *actually* produced out of the other, but in the inner idea which is the ground of nature."¹ Philosophy traces the process of Nature towards Spirit in Mechanics, Physics and Organics. It will be seen from this that Hegelianism is quite neutral as regards a development theory like Darwinism. That is matter for the scientists, and to be decided on scientific evidence. What philosophy has to do with is development in the idea; an organism represents a higher and more complex stage of the Idea than an inorganic formation, and the human organism a higher stage than any of its pre-human ancestors; and that whether the transition from one to the other was ever made in time or not. Even science can never show us the actual transition—can never, as Dr. Stirling vividly puts it, catch Nature half in and half out. Philosophy with its principle of continuity not only allows but demands that the gulf between species and species be always more perfectly bridged over by intermediate forms. But the completed stages are all that we can ever see, be the difference never so infinitesimal; and to philosophy these stages are all stages of the Idea (represent ideas), and as such only have they an existence for thought.

Unless on a very external notion of means and end, teleology is not banished when it is shown that a series of actual transitions has been brought about by mechanical necessity in the shape of adaptation to environment and the struggle for existence. Means can only be judged of in relation to the end actually attained. Men of science are fond of insisting on the extreme naturalness of the means in question; but their extreme naturalness lies in nothing but their perfect fitness to ensure the end, which, as matter of fact, is realised by them. The forms that result are rational; nature is a system of rational forms, and culminates in the existence of rational beings. If all this be admitted in detail, then it is useless to deny Hegel's general position that the development in nature is the work and expression of immanent reason. We may apply to the position words which Kant uses in a narrower sense of teleology:—"It converts the systematic unity of nature in relation to the idea of a supreme Intelligence into a principle of universal appli-

¹ Hegel, *Werke* VII, i, 32.

cation."¹ But, as already indicated, it does not (or, at least, ought not to) attempt an *a priori* determination of particular connexions.

Hegel shares to some extent with the other Nature-philosophers the blame of having nursed extravagant expectations as to the powers of philosophy in dealing with nature. But in general he recognises the limitation of its province in terms sufficiently ample. Many, however, will regard his way of putting it as partaking of disingenuousness. It is the impotence of nature to hold fast the idea that sets limits to philosophy—not the impotence of the philosopher to match the subtlety of nature. Hegel is fond of expressing his contempt for nature as the realm of mere contingency. The chequered scene it presents is not to be rated higher than the equally casual fancies of the mind that surrenders itself to its own caprices. It is most unseemly, therefore, to desire that the Notion should take account of such petty contingencies. Now it is quite true, as he maintains, that the infinite particulars of nature serve none of the higher interests of reason, and that, consequently, neither philosophy nor reason is concerned to show that they must have been *so* and not otherwise. The relative position of the different parts of a landscape, the exact spot occupied by a rock in ocean, or, to take his own example, the continually changing configuration and grouping of the clouds are things in the strictest sense contingent or indifferent to reason. They are all strictly determined in a chain of necessity, but it would, as he says, be an empty trifling and the very pedantry of precision to follow out the links in each case. Still when we hear the surface of nature spoken of as that in which chance ranges unchecked, that simply means that philosophy takes no notice of individuals, as regards the time, place, and manner of their existence, and that all actual occurrence is beyond its sphere. Philosophy concerns itself only with the Idea of which the individuals are the bearers. While allowing, therefore, a certain justification to the category of contingency, as marking out by contrast the sphere in which philosophy is at home, we reject the appearance of knowledge which Hegel manages to convey by its means.

The same is true when we pass to the Philosophy of Spirit. The general form of personality is deducible, but not a living human spirit with its individual thoughts, feelings and actions. We deal, in Hegel's remarkable phrase, only with the universal individual;² the individual in the individual remains, as Schell-

¹ Kant, *Werke* III., 63.

² "Das allgemeine Individuum"—in the *Phänomenologie*, *Werke* II. 22.

ing says, the incomprehensible and inexplicable point in philosophy.¹ So also with history. Philosophy recognises history as the process of the Absolute Spirit or the record of the realisation of the idea of Freedom. But the philosophy of history can construct no individual event, and cannot exhaust the sum of contingent conditions, which made any period or epoch exactly what it was. There the historian proper has his province. Philosophy recognises only the thread of purpose that runs through this maze of particulars; and even the explicit form of that purpose it does not bring with it to the facts, but learns with ever greater fulness from converse with the actual course of events. True historical insight is born of this union of the universal and particular. The two sides are perpetually modifying one another in the process of research, but the one is impossible without the other. Facts are infinite multiplicity, and cannot be studied or known at all unless we have some scheme of arrangement, be it ever so meagre. They are blind, we may say, without the universal of the mind, that introduces order into their chaos. But the universal, on the other hand, is an abstract and empty schema, the mode of whose realisation we cannot predict, till we actually see it in facts. The philosophic idea of history is, therefore, according to the way we look at it, an inevitable presupposition or the result of the ripest induction. There has been much talk about the arbitrary construction of history on the part of Hegel and his followers. As matter of fact, this may or may not have been the case; but it certainly is not involved in his philosophy. The philosopher comes to history with the same presupposition with which the man of science approaches nature—*viz.*, that it is rational. He *construes* history, as the other construes nature, under this presupposition; but both are equally dependent upon experience for their materials and for the discovery of the particular way in which reason has realised itself.

If this criticism be extended to the Absolute Spirit, it will be found that it is only by taking up the concrete life of the world and of history into the formula of the Idea that Hegel com-

¹ The admissions of Fichte and Schelling on this point are worth quoting. Fichte says:—"My existence as *man* among possible rational beings, and as this *definite* person among men appears as the absolutely contingent, and supplies the merely empirical element in our knowledge. Here all deduction has an end." (*Werke*, I. 489.) The passage from Schelling from which I have quoted runs thus:—"My limitation in general is explicable from the infinite tendency of the Ego to become object to itself; but limitation in general leaves the determinate limitation perfectly free, and yet both have their origin in one and the same act. . . . The latter is, therefore, the incomprehensible and inexplicable in philosophy." (*System des transcendentalen Idealismus*.)

municates to the latter a real value and content. This is admitted when the realisation of Spirit is seen not only in philosophy, in the element of thought, but also in religion, in the element of figurate conception, and in art, or immediate perception, as well as in the institutions and life of the rational state and in universal history. Philosophy is the supreme form, and comprehends all the others, in the sense of understanding their nature. But it could not do so, unless the knowing subject were more than a mere thinker. A pure intelligence could not see itself realised in art. "Art," says Hegel, "is the presentation and self-satisfaction of the Absolute in the form of the sensuous phenomenon."¹ But the self-satisfaction of the Absolute is our own feeling of aesthetic satisfaction, and that is the result of our sensuous-intellectual nature. Just as little could a pure intelligence enter into the life of the religious consciousness. The nature of man, in short, is not exhausted in pure thought; and if so, neither is the nature of the Absolute, nor the methods by which we may approach it. Notions, though the skeleton of reality, are no more than the skeleton; we have to clothe them with the life of our many-sided nature before our account of reality is complete. The office of philosophy is to show the movement of thought in all forms of life—to express them as it were in terms of thought. But the transcript of philosophy is only "grey in grey;" it has meaning only to those who have known the flesh and blood of reality.²

In the notion of the Absolute Spirit we have reached the end of our long chart and way. It is the notion of a Self which yet is realised in no individual self in experience. It is the first and third of Kant's regulative Ideas reduced to unity, with the second as the bond of their union. Kant, like Descartes, found his centre in the knowing Self. But Kant did not, like Descartes, separate the Ego from its "essence"—the organism of knowledge. The "being whose essence consists in thinking" became, in Descartes' hands a merely individual substance; and, as such, it was swept away in Spinozism by the flood of the divine life. The Synthetic Unity of Kant proved able to bear the strain in virtue of the great principle, which it implied, of the unconditionedness of thought. And now for the first time

¹ Hegel, *apud* Haym, *Hegel und seine Zeit*, p. 441.

² The following sentence of Hegel's sounds like a half-unwilling acknowledgment of this. He is speaking of religion and says:—"I do not deny that cognition may be one-sided, and that there may belong to religion besides, as essential elements, feeling, intuition, faith; just as to God there may belong more than the notion of him as intelligising and intelligised." *Apud* Haym, p. 403.

it became possible to unite the Self and God without the annihilation of either term.

That the threefold idea of Hegel is not merely regulative, it is hardly necessary to say: that is his continual contention against Kant and Fichte. The world cannot hang on a mere "Sollen". Metaphysic knows no ought-to-be that is not already realised. Final and efficient cause, real and ideal, are identical in a self-realising whole; an ideal which is in things, and not merely in our heads, is necessarily real at every moment. Yet we are sure to be assailed here with clamorous questions as to 'the existence of God' and the place assigned to Him in the system. To these the answer must be, that, for a philosopher of Hegel's stamp, there can be no greater absurdity than to deny the existence of God. All things are real only as they exist in God, and all philosophy is an attempt to define more exactly what God is. But existence is a crude category, which may mean almost anything, and which, to the unphilosophic mind, always means something which it can lay hold of, something which has its analogy in the limited circle of the person's own ideas and experience. When the question is pressed in this sense, we can only reply with Schelling:—"God never exists, if by existence is meant what we see in the objective world. . . . but He reveals himself continually".

The language used may appear mystic to the man who has never asked himself the ultimate speculative question. But, indeed, philosophy, as conceived by Hegel, was not intended to give a transcript, or at best a systematisation, of the so-called 'facts' of ordinary consciousness. It aimed at giving the inner essence, or ultimate truth, of all appearance. Hence his recurring assertion that the content of philosophy and of religion is the same, only the element in which it is recognised being different. Both aim at a synthesis of existence; both, therefore, deal with an object which cannot be described or verified like an object of experience. "Every philosophy is essentially Idealism, and agrees in this with religion. . . . Its Idealism consists simply in the fact that it does not look upon the finite as truly existent."¹ Every philosophy is, indeed, a poem, if measured against the prose of every-day life. It presents things not exactly as they meet us there, but as a complete, harmonious whole. Even Dr. Stirling confesses that the system of Hegel is to him "in a certain sense only a poem".² But like every great poem it does not deceive; it gives a higher truth. It clings to ordinary reality, till it has extracted from it its inmost essence, and that is what it presents us with.

¹ Hegel, *Werke* III. 171. ² *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, XIII. 38.

But I have failed of my purpose, if it has not been made plain that Hegelianism, in spite of its soaring synthesis, speaks essentially the words of soberness. It puts an end to transcendent speculation, far more effectually than Kant, by showing that all the objects of such speculation are immanent in the world that now is. In fact no philosophy is so well-fitted as Hegelianism to withdraw men from fruitless questions, and to make them see the solution of all problems in the faithful work of their own sphere. It is hampered, moreover, by no presuppositions as to the empirical existence and course of things; it is ready, accordingly, to accept and rationalise any theory which science and history may establish. Idealism accepts all that physiology has to say about the dependence of thought on the organism, and is not discomfited by the most materialistic statement of the facts. It admits as a matter of course the empirical derivation of all our conscious life from feeling or sensation. "Everything is present in feeling," says Hegel, "and if any one likes to express himself so, everything that emerges in the consciousness of spirit and of reason has its source and origin in feeling."¹ The gradual building up of morality on the basis of our instincts and impulses, and the dependence of subjective morality upon the customs and institutions of the community and state are an integral part of Hegelian ethics. The Philosophy of Religion exhibits the development of religious thought from the fetish-worship and magical rites of the savage.

But materialists in cosmology and sensationalists in psychology think they have explained a rational universe and the human consciousness from that which is neither rational nor conscious. The evolutionist in morals and the naturalist in religion imagine that they have deduced morality and religion from non-moral and non-religious conditions. They seem to think that, in explaining the origin of a thing, they have explained away the thing itself. Hence the deleterious influence of such views, when spread among the unreflecting. The special merit of Hegelianism is that it sets all these results in their true light, and shows that they do not imperil the divinity of reason that hedges about our lives. "Source and origin," Hegel adds to the passage last quoted, "mean no more than the first and baldest form in which a thing appears." Nothing is explained by being merely thrown back in time. A history of phenomena is no metaphysic of the timeless presuppositions of that history.

Hegelianism is the conscious attempt to give such a metaphysic, and so to supply a perennial want of the human mind. Hegel gives us formulæ by which we may express the nature

¹ *Werke* VII, ii., 117. Cf. also *Ibid.*, p. 311.

of the one great Fact or Life, which, in the widest sense, we call God. Progress in philosophy means reaching a fuller form of expression for that Life. If they do not explain everything, these Hegelian formulæ are yet the best we have. It depends on ourselves to fill them up. According as we use it, a formula may be a Procrustean bed to which we make existence conform by cutting off its living members; or it may be expansive enough to allow free play within itself to all forms of life. This expansiveness will, I think, be found to belong to the Hegelian formulæ; and they may be accepted even by those who may hold, with Lotze, that this "bold monism" undertook far more than is possible to human powers. Hegel and Lotze are at one in "the indestructible confidence of the spirit that the world does not only exist, but that something is meant by it".¹ This is Idealism in the broad Hegelian sense, because it is the assumption that the universe exists only as the exponent of that meaning. The meaning communicates value to what would otherwise be valueless; and all true philosophy aims, like Hegelianism, at throwing into words the 'truth' or perfect meaning of the universe.

ANDREW SETH.

VI.—NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS.

ON DEFINITIONS.

A DEFINITION is a "proposition declaratory of the meaning of a word" (Mill). As to this, I believe, all logicians are agreed, as well as that the meaning which it declares and as to which it affords us information, is the Connotation of the word, not its Denotation—the Comprehension of the notion, not its Extension.

It appears, further, to be generally admitted that the information thus given must be *complete*. The adequate definition gives us not only a portion, but "the *whole* of the facts which the name involves in its signification" (Mill); "the sum of all the properties connoted by the name: it *exhausts* the meaning of the word" (Bain). Mill even goes so far as to say:—"The definition of a name . . . is the sum total of all the essential propositions which can be framed with that name for their subject. All propositions, the truth of which is implied in the name, all those which we are made aware of by merely hearing the name, are included in the definition, if complete, and may be evolved from it without the aid of any other premisses."

According to the promise of logicians, the amount of information that we may fairly expect a definition to give us as to the connotation

¹ Lotze, *Metaphysik*, p. 180.