

In the further elaboration of his ethical doctrine, Kant was, however, hardly more successful than he had been in his metaphysics. The 'Thing in itself,' the Noumenon, had there remained as an empty abstraction, useless for the purpose of any philosophy which desired to understand existing things or phenomena. The supreme idea of his ethics, the idea of the self-restraining freedom of the Good Will, remained likewise an empty conception. It had indeed a character of its own, a peculiarity which separated it from every other reality; and that was, that it points to something which *ought* to be, in opposition to that which *is*. It finds its expression in language in the imperative mood, the voice of command. Thus Kant termed it the Categorical Imperative. And Kant went a step further, he conceived it as a law binding on all rational beings without regard for persons or circumstances. This constitutes its universality, and he expressed it in the well-known formula: "Act so that the maxims of your actions may be universally applicable for others as well as for yourself."

16.
Gap in
Kant's
ethics.

It has frequently been pointed out that the formula of Kant may do very well as a regulative principle, as a formal rule of conduct, but that it does not really define what is intrinsically good, that it does not deal

dividual and creative spirit which impressed the contemporaries of Schiller and Goethe so much, more than half a century earlier, in Germany,—a time which Mill himself mentions under the name of the "Goethean and Fichtean" period as "one of the three periods which have made Europe what it is"—

the other two being the Reformation and the latter half of the eighteenth century. Leslie Stephen considers that Mill's individualism is extreme, and that he attached too little importance to the historical antecedents and surroundings of great personalities.