

tinguished from the animal species, he fastened upon two traits of human nature, the selfish and the opposed instinct, Egoism and Altruism, the personal and the social factor.

Beyond this statement, which recalls to some extent Adam Smith's theory of moral sentiments, Comte does not seem to have made any real contribution to Ethics, for he neither discusses the conception of duty and responsibility nor troubles himself to define the end and aim of moral conduct, be this conceived as consisting in virtue or in happiness. He does not seem to realise that moral goods or The Good can in reality only exist and be realised in individual minds by persons who, though forming a community or society, must nevertheless be possessed of an inner life and enjoy individual freedom. Discarding altogether introspection as a means of studying human nature, he directs all his attention to the external phenomena and events of history. It is in and through a review of this that he hopes to gain a knowledge of human nature. In fact he discards entirely the individual and regards exclusively the collective aspect. Society is an organism, and as little as we can study the phenomena of life if we lose sight of the fact of organisation, just as little can we study the human species if we lose sight of its existence in the aggregate of society and its historical development.

Two volumes of the first and most important of his larger works are thus taken up by a historical survey, by a philosophy of history. This he conceives to consist in the gradual ascendancy of the specifically human

36.
Neglects
philo-
sophical
ethics.