

of the philosopher to define this highest law and to show its application and working in the whole region of practical morality, both individual and social. Whereas the French philosophers put in the foreground the natural rights of man and attached little or no importance to the ideas of obligation and duty except as necessary arrangements of convenience and expediency, the Kantian philosophy put in the foreground the idea of duty, of an obligation, and discussed the social order in the light of facilities bestowed and limitations imposed upon individual members of society so as to enable them to follow the highest command, "to order all their relations with freedom according to reason," as Fichte said; but the highest law of reason was the moral principle, the call to Duty.

During the various phases in which the philosophical ideal of German thought, which we may define as a spiritualised rationalism, found embodiment, we see how it came into closer and closer contact with the higher practical questions, notably those of society. This was inevitable, and was brought about through the personal positions which the several leading thinkers of the nation successively occupied.

Kant, who was the prime mover and gave the impetus to this whole course of thought, lived secluded in a small out-of-the-way university town in the north-east of Germany. Fichte, originally destined to be a preacher, went from Saxony to Switzerland, from there to the classical centre of Germany, and finally settled in Berlin, where he helped to lay the foundation of what became in the course of the century the foremost German uni-