changes depend. The extreme rigidity of Kant's categorical imperative has been abandoned, giving rise to a tendency in the direction of indefiniteness in moral theory and leading inevitably—as it seems to many—to laxity in practice. Before dealing more fully with this important ethical tendency of modern sociology, it may be useful to summarise in a few words what the Nineteenth Century has, so far as we have seen, accomplished in dealing with the social problem.

69. Scientific and practical interests.

And first, we may note that this has been treated in two distinct interests. The one is purely scientific, taking this term not in the sense in which it has been used in this country and in France, but in the wider sense prevalent in Germany, where it denotes investigations by any suitable method of any phenomenon with the sole object of ascertaining its nature. The other interest is practical, the object being to gain a basis for social reform; and this, either in the more limited sense of improving the laws and customs of an existing order of things—such was, in the main, the aim of the older school of English social and political philosophers—or with the more ambitious object of a fundamental reorganisation of the whole fabric of human society. With these two interests in view, placing either the one or the other in the foreground, we have three tolerably distinct sociological theories.

70. Three sociological theories.

The first is that view which places the idea of humanity in the foreground, conceiving this as an intellectual and spiritual principle which lies at the foundation of culture and civilisation, permeating and gradually transforming the natural and cruder forms of