

been in continual revolt. 'Search for the ideal runs through the whole century,'<sup>1</sup> and Goethe may be said to have summed up the mind of his time when, speaking of Holbach's *System of Nature*, the Bible of Materialism, he wrote, 'We could not understand how such a book could be dangerous. It appeared to us so dark, so Cimmerian, so death-like, that we could scarcely find patience to endure its presence.' All the same the deeper mind of the nation felt that it was dangerous so long as it went unanswered, and may be said to have been continuously occupied with the problem of a philosophical substitute for it. The most notable attempt to find such a substitute was that of the mathematician Leibniz. Unfortunately Leibniz's philosophy was vitiated by the acceptance of the very individualism that was the stronghold of materialism. After splitting up the universe into monads which were without windows, far less doors opening on the world without, he had no principle to reunite them and was fain to have recourse to the miracle of an external creator and regulator of their actions.

From the alternative that was thus forced upon the thought of the century of materialism, or unreason and incoherence, and the moral chaos to which it inevitably led, it was the merit of Kant to have offered a way of escape. The metaphysical basis of his system is too long a story to enter on here. It amounted to the demonstration that no experience of any kind, even that on which materialism itself relied, was possible except on the assumption of a constructive or, as he called it, a synthetic principle which was supplied, or at least first revealed itself consciously in mind, and was the source of our judgements of value, whether of truth, of beauty,

<sup>1</sup> Lange, *History of Materialism*, vol. ii, p. 143.