

KANT.

Somewhere in his writings, DeQuincey divides the total books of a language into two classes, Literature, and Knowledge. Under books of Knowledge he includes the almanac, dictionary, books of travel, in fact all works in which the matter to be communicated is of more importance than the form of its communication. And by Literature he does not mean books which instruct and amuse, for that would exclude *Paradise Lost* and kindred works, but those which impart power. And here is a principle which might be made a plea for the study of Philosophy; for its tendency, like the study of *Paradise Lost*, is to impart power by rectifying the human mind and correcting its mode of seeing. Again, the ultimate facts of our commonest studies have a metaphysical basis. Take, for example, Chemistry and the terms it uses, as substance and attribute, cause and effect, must be referred to Metaphysics to inquire into their origin and validity, and to determine their province and interrelation. Thus Philosophy, as a study will not only be found to be of the highest utility, but absolutely indispensable, despite the protests of a class who, like Lord Jeffery, consider it useless because of its lack of utility.

But apart from the merits of the study in itself considered, the men who have rendered themselves famous in these paths must continue to be objects of liberal interest. If greatness be the measure of interest, certainly no philosopher can claim a greater share of attention than Immanuel Kant, the great thinker of Königsberg; and it is intended in this article to give a brief outline of his personal history and domestic habits, gleaned mostly from the pages of DeQuincey.

Immanuel Kant, the second of six children, and of Scottish descent on his father's side, was born at Königsberg, in Prussia, on the 22nd of April, 1724. His parents were poor, but with some assistance succeeded in giving the future philosopher a liberal education. In 1737 he lost his mother, a woman who, by the elevated tone in which she trained his morals, and the bent she gave his early thoughts, contributed not a little to render him illustrious. In 1740 Kant entered the University of Königsberg. In 1746, when twenty-two years old, he printed his first work,—*On the Valuation of Living Forces*. From that time until 1770 he supported himself by lecturing to private families, and delivering lectures to military men on the art of

fortification. In 1770 he was appointed to the chair of Mathematics, which he soon after exchanged for that of Logic and Metaphysics. In 1781 he published his great work—the *Critik der Reinen Vernunft*, or *Critique of Pure Reason*.

His life was one of strict, almost stoical, dignity and purity, and is characterized by its rigid monotony rather than the variety of its incidents. To describe one day of his life would be to describe the most of them. At five minutes before five o'clock in the morning, the year round, Kant's servant, Lampe, who had formerly served in the army, marched into his master's room and in a loud voice said, "Mr. Professor the time is come!" And five o'clock invariably found Kant seated at his breakfast of one cup of tea, which was more often two or a larger number; after this he smoked his allowance for the day—one pipeful of tobacco. At seven he proceeded to the lecture-room; from that to his writing table. In regard to his dinner parties, which he considered should not, himself included, consist of less than the number of the Graces, or more than that of the Muses, Kant observed two rules. The *first* was that the company should be miscellaneous, for the purpose of securing variety in the conversation; and the *second*, that there should be some young men the company, chosen chiefly from the students of the University, in order to impress a spirit of gaiety and youthfulness on the conversation. At the table every person helped himself, for Kant would brook no delays. His friends considered it a red-letter day in their lives to dine with him. Possessing a great understanding, wonderful command of knowledge, caustic wit, and an air of noble self-confidence, Kant was an instructor in the highest degree without appearing so. He tolerated no calms, and under the delightful flow of his conversation the time passed rapidly and profitably from one o'clock to four, sometimes five, and even later. After dinner he walked out for exercise, always alone, as he wished to breathe exclusively through his nostrils, which he could not do if accompanied. He flattered himself that this practice, so steadily adhered to, secured for him immunity from coughs; colds, and such like complaints. And certain it was, that though of a naturally weak constitution, Kant enjoyed excellent health, which may be attributed partly to his rigid conformity to prescribed rules of living, and partly to the stoical innocence of his life. At six he sat down to his