

**HISTORY OF MATERIALISM AND
CRITICISM OF ITS PRESENT
IMPORTANCE. IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. III. SECOND
EDITION**

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FRIEDRICH ALBERT LANGE & ERNEST CHESTER THOMAS

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III. SECOND EDITION**

HISTORY OF MATERIALISM

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CRITICISM OF ITS PRESENT
IMPORTANCE.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Second Book—(continued).

HISTORY OF MATERIALISM SINCE KANT.

SECOND SECTION CONTINUED.—THE NATURAL SCIENCES.

CHAPTER III.

THE SCIENTIFIC COSMOGONY, Pp. 3-25

Modern Cosmogony connects itself with Newton; the condensation-theory, 3-5. The geological stability-theory, 5-6. Long periods of time, 6. Conclusions as to the necessary destruction of the solar system, and of all life in the universe, 7-13. The origin of organisms, 13 ff. The hypothesis of spontaneous generation, 14-21. The transmission-theory according to Thomson and Helmholtz; Zöllner's opposition, 21-24. Fechner's views, 24-25.

CHAPTER IV.

DARWINISM AND TELEOLOGY, Pp. 26-80

Interest in Darwinism has greatly increased; the questions have been specialized, but the main features have remained unaltered, 26-27. The superstition of species, 27. Necessity of experiment, 28. Teleology, 28-35. Individual, 36-41. The network of classification of the animal world is inapplicable to the lower forms, 42. Stability of organic forms as necessary consequence of the struggle for existence; the equilibrium of forms, 43-47. Mimicry, 48-51. Correlation of growth; morphological kinds; the law of development, 51-59. Differences between apparently like primitive forms, 59-62. Monophyletic and Polyphyletic descent, 62-66. False and true Teleology, 66-70. Von Hartmann's Teleology as a model of false Teleology based upon a gross misunderstanding of the calculus of probabilities, 71-79. The value of the 'Philosophy of the Unconscious' does not depend upon this, 79-80.

Q 12 11-33 J.W.T.B

THIRD SECTION.—THE NATURAL SCIENCES CONTINUED.
MAN AND THE SOUL.

CHAPTER I.

THE RELATION OF MAN TO THE ANIMAL WORLD, . . . Pp. 83-110

Growing interest in Anthropological as compared with Cosmical questions; progress of the Anthropological Sciences, 83-85. The application of the theory of descent to man obvious, 85. Cuvier's diata, 87-88. Discovery of diluvial human remains; their age, 89-93. Traces of ancient civilizations, 94-101. Influence of the sense of beauty, 101. The upright position; origin of speech, 102. The course of the development of civilization at first slow, then more and more rapid, 104. The question of unity of species, 103-107. Relation of Man to the Ape, 107-110.

CHAPTER II.

BRAIN AND SOUL, Pp. 111-161

The difficulties of the subject have become more obvious with the progress of the sciences. Injurious reaction of scholastic psychology, 111-112. Phrenology, 113-125. Reflex movements as the basis of psychical activity. Pflüger's experiments, 125-127. Various misunderstandings and erroneous interpretations of physiological experiments, 127-133. The brain does not produce any psychological abstractum, 133. Erroneous theories of Cernus and Huschke, 134-137. Scholastic ideas must be discarded, 137-138. Stubbornness of the prejudices as to the localizations of mental functions, 138. Meynert's brain researches, 139-142. Psychological importance of the motor paths, 142-144. Identity of the excitation in all nerves, 144. Experiments of Hitzig, Nothnagel, and Ferrier; their meaning, 145-153. Wundt's remarks on the elementary phenomena of the psychical functions, 153. Carrying out of the laws of the conservation of energy by the cerebral functions, 154-159. Intellectual value of the content of sensation, 159.

CHAPTER III.

SCIENTIFIC PSYCHOLOGY, Pp. 162-201

Errors in the attempts at a Scientific and Mathematical Psychology: Herbart and his School, 162-167. Necessity of a criticism of Psychology, 167. Hypotheses as to the 'Nature of the Soul'; a psychology without a Soul, 168-169. Criticism of self-observation and of observation by means of the 'internal sense,' 169-174. Scientific Method and Speculation, 175-178. Animal psychology, 178, 179. Ethnopsychology; ethnographical accounts of travel, 180-183. Darwin's influence, 183-184. Somatic method; application of experiment, 184-186. Empirical psychology in England: Mill, Spencer, Bain, 186-193. Moral statistics, 194-201.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF THE SENSE-ORGANS AND THE WORLD AS REPRESENTATION, Pp. 207-230

The physiology of the sense-organs shows that we do not perceive external objects but produce the appearance of such objects, 207-208. The projection of objects outward and erect vision according to Müller and Ueberweg, 206-209. Further exposition and criticism of Ueberweg's theory, 209-215. Helmholtz on the nature of the sense-perceptions, 215-216. The sense-organs as an abstraction-apparatus, 217-218. Analogy with abstraction in thinking, 218. Psychological explanation of phenomena does not exclude the existence of mechanical cause, 218-219. The sense-world a product of our organisation, 219. Unconscious inferences, 220-222. The assumption of a mechanism for all psychical functions not necessarily Materialism, because the mechanism itself is only representation, 223-224. Ueberweg's attempt to demonstrate the transcendental reality of space, 224-225; results, 225-229. Bokitsansky's contention that the atomistic theory supports an idealistic view of things, 229-230.

FOURTH SECTION.—ETHICAL MATERIALISM AND RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

POLITICAL ECONOMY AND DOGMATIC EGOTISM, Pp. 233-268

Origin of the theoretical assumption of a purely egoistic society, 233-235. Right and limits of abstraction; confusion of abstraction and reality, 235-237. The accumulation of capital and the law of the increase of wants, 237-241. Supposed utility of Egoism, 242-244. Origin of Egoism and Sympathy, 244-246. Moral progress wrongly denied by Buckle, 246-247. Egoism as a moral principle and the harmony of interests, 247-253. Examination of the doctrine of the harmony of interests, 253-259. Causes of inequality and rise of the proletariat, 259-268.

CHAPTER II.

CHRISTIANITY AND ENLIGHTENMENT, Pp. 269-291

The ideas of Christianity as remedies for social evils: their apparent inefficacy according to Mill, 269-270. Mediate and gradual influence; connexion of Christianity and social reform, 270-273. Moral influences of belief partly favourable, partly unfavourable, 273-276. Importance of form in Morality and Religion, 276-280. Pretension of Religion to truth, 280-282. Impossibility of a Religion of Reason without Imagination, 282-287. Pastor Lang and his argument against this view, 287-291.

CHAPTER III.

THEORETICAL MATERIALISM IN ITS RELATION TO ETHICAL MATERIALISM AND TO RELIGION, Pp. 292-334

Character of the usual attacks upon Religion, 292-293. Predominance of the rational principle, 294-295. Plans for a new religion; Comte's new hierarchy, 295-297. Scientific knowledge cannot be handled ecclesiastically but only secularly, 297-298. It is not moral teaching that makes religion but the tragical stirring of the soul, 299. Our cultus of humanity does not require religious forms, 300. Materialism would be most consistent in rejecting Religion altogether, 301. Examination of the connexion between Ethical and Theoretical Materialism, 302-305. Development of Materialism with Ueberweg, 305. His earlier standpoint, 306. Materialistic basis of his Psychology, 306-309. His Teleology, 310. Consciousness of its weakness, 311. The existence of God, 312. Transition to Materialism: vouchers for it from his letters to Czolbe and to the Author, 313-316. Doubt as to Ueberweg's asserted Atheism, 316. Ethical consequences of his philosophy: relation to Christianity, 316-323. David Friedrich Strauss: his last and definitive philosophy Materialistic, 323-325. His Materialism correct and thought out, 325-327. Superficial treatment of social and political questions; Conservative tendency, 327-328. Rejection of the specific features of Christian ethics; Optimism; condemnation of the worship of the Free Congregations, 328-330. Neglect of the people and its needs, 331. Leaning of the propertied classes to Materialism; the Socialists and the danger of the ruin of our civilization, 332-334.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STANDPOINT OF THE IDEAL, Pp. 335-362

Materialism as the philosophy of reality; nature of reality, 335-337. The functions of Synthesis in speculation and in religion; origin of Optimism and Pessimism, 337-338. Value and import of reality, 339-340. Its limits: the step to the Ideal. Pessimism of reflexion and optimism of the Ideal, 341-342. Reality needs to be supplemented by an ideal world; Schiller's philosophical poems; the future of religion and its inner essence, 342-343. The philosophy of religion, especially Fichte: grouping of men by the form of their inner life, 349-352. Fortunes of religion in critical times; possibility of new forms of religion; conditions of its existence, 353-356. Conditions of peace between opposed standpoints, 356-359. The Materialistic controversy as a serious sign of the time; the social question and the impending conflicts; possibility of their mitigation, 359-362.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND BOOK [AS POSTSCRIPT], Pp. 363-365

INDEX Pp. 367-376

Second Book

Continued.

**HISTORY OF MATERIALISM
SINCE KANT.**

VOL. III.

A

SECOND SECTION

Continued.

THE NATURAL SCIENCES.

CHAPTER III.

THE SCIENTIFIC COSMOGONY.

ONE of the most important questions in ancient Materialism was the question of the natural cosmogony. The much-ridiculed doctrine of the endless parallel motion of the atoms through infinite space, of the gradual entwinings and combinations of the atoms into solid and fluid, living and lifeless bodies, for all its singularity, had still a great work to accomplish. And beyond doubt these ideas have had a mighty influence upon modern times, though the connexion of our natural cosmogony with that of Epikuros is not so clear as the history of Atomism. It is rather the very point which subjects the ancient ideas to the first decisive modification, from which that idea of the origin of the universe was developed, which, despite its hypothetical character, even yet has the utmost importance. Let us hear Helmholtz on this point.

"It was Kant who, feeling great interest in the physical description of the earth and the planetary system, had undertaken the laborious study of the works of Newton; and, as an evidence of the depth to which he had penetrated into the fundamental ideas of Newton, seized the masterly