

63.
Comte's
sociology.

I have already referred to the fact that, whereas philosophical thought in the beginning of the century moved mainly in the realm of logic, metaphysics, and psychology, at the end of the century the study which seems to be gradually superseding all others is the study of Sociology, a term which was introduced by Auguste Comte, and has latterly become a watchword in the literature of the whole of Western Europe—latest in Germany. This phenomenon has various and very deep-seated causes, which have shown themselves in all the three countries, but in different forms. They showed themselves first of all, and most drastically, in France, where the Revolution had made a clean sweep of many of the older foundations of society, and where men of the highest order and in almost every department of science and literature had speculated or practically worked in the direction of a reconstruction of society. A temporary check was indeed put upon these endeavours by the reactionary movement during the Restoration. Nevertheless, all through the century, French literature has systematically, or in more general ways, worked at the great social problems. In England, though the movements were less convulsive, the interests of the Masses, as opposed to those of the Classes, have increasingly occupied the attention of both statesmen and thinkers, the reform movement having been the leading feature of internal politics during the greater part of the century. It was in England that the problem of population and the evils of overcrowding were first openly discussed, and it is not too much to say that the misery of the residuum which the con-