

of the same systematic treatment, philosophical subjects such as Economics, Politics, and questions of taste and literary criticism filled the pages of those numerous and popular reviews which form such an important department of nineteenth century literature.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In this country before the beginning of the nineteenth century there existed no important periodical literature which appealed to a larger circle of cultivated readers. The British Essayists, headed by Steele and Addison, possessed their peculiar interest and have acquired the standing of classics. Some of them had European reputation and much influence, notably on German literature. The 'Gentleman's Magazine,' founded in 1731, had a wide circulation, and imparted a large amount of varied and desultory information. The 'Monthly Review' (1749) and the 'Critical Review' (1756) had no commanding influence. The Reviews existing in the beginning of the nineteenth century were said to be in their dotage. At this time new life was infused into periodical literature from a quite unexpected quarter. The 'Edinburgh Review,' edited during twenty-seven years by Jeffrey, began its brilliant career with quite unforeseen success in the year 1802, and very soon became the organ of a distinct political party with a definite programme of reform in things political, social, and literary. It provoked in the year 1809 the foundation of a literary organ for the opposite party, in defence—as was said—of Church, Tory, and War Principles. "The defence was a consequence of the attack. And it is fortunate that it was so. For besides getting these opinions fairly discussed, the party excesses natural to any unchecked publication were diminished; and a work arose which, in many respects, is an honour to British

literature, and has called out, and indirectly reared, a great variety of the highest order of talent" (Cockburn's 'Life of Lord Jeffrey,' vol. i. p. 192). But this critical attitude, this spirit of "accuse and defence," peculiar to leaders in the legal profession who launched this whole enterprise into existence, was not favourable to a just appreciation of the scientific spirit, and both the 'Edinburgh,' as in the case of Thomas Young, and the 'Quarterly,' as in the case of Charles Darwin, have shown themselves singularly incompetent in the discussion of novel and leading scientific ideas. The scientific interest was not introduced into general literature either in Germany or in this country before the fourth decade of the century. In England it was characteristically introduced in connection with Economic questions. In Germany its introduction was partly through French models which had a great influence upon men like Humboldt and Liebig; and secondly, also through some of the representatives of the philosophy of nature such as Oken, Schubert, Steffens, and Oerstedt. Under the influence of these very different interests, review literature in Germany and in England has in the course of the century become more and more expository and representative rather than critical—its object being to spread knowledge and information and to abstain from premature criticism. All this is due to the increasing prevalence of the scientific as against that of the critical spirit.