

6.
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criticism in
the wider
sense.

in the larger sense to denote a definite attitude of the inquiring mind towards any subject which is accessible to a critical treatment. Accordingly we may look upon Germany as the real home of the critical spirit and the critical methods in their widest sense and in their most unfettered development, as we may look upon France as the birthplace of modern philological and literary criticism. In the former country a philosophy sprang up at the end of the eighteenth century which called itself critical "*par excellence*," and which, in spite of many brilliant attempts to supersede or dislodge it, still constitutes the rallying-point for most of the systematic thought which has not come under the influence of the scientific or exact methods. Although, therefore, we

century ago among most critics; neither is it a question mainly of a psychological sort, to be answered by discovering and delineating the peculiar nature of the poet from his poetry, as is usual with the best of our own critics at present; but it is, not indeed exclusively, but inclusively of those two other questions, properly and ultimately a question on the essence and peculiar life of the poetry itself." Carlyle also pointed out that Herder, Schiller, Goethe "are men of another stature of form and movement whom Bossu's scale and compasses could not measure without difficulty, or rather, not at all." And yet Carlyle does not use criticism in the wider sense in which I am now using it. The representative of the latter usage in this country is Matthew Arnold, who, in various writings, but notably in his 'Essays in Criticism' (1865), took the wider view opened out to him as much by the earlier and the more recent French critics as by Goethe and by the constructive criticism of Nie-

buhr, introduced into this country by his father, Thomas Arnold, of Rugby. In the first of the Essays, "On the Function of Criticism at the present Time," he defines as "the business of the critical power, in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is. Thus it tends, at last, to make an intellectual situation of which the creative power can profitably avail itself. It tends to establish an order of ideas, if not absolutely true, yet true by comparison with that which it displaces; to make the best ideas prevail. Presently these new ideas reach society, the touch of truth is the touch of life, and there is a stir and growth everywhere; out of this stir and growth come the creative epochs of literature" (p. 6). Matthew Arnold also points out how the political and party interest so prevalent in England is detrimental to this higher form of criticism, "the rule of which should be disinterestedness" (p. 18).