

the historical took the place of the analytical treatment. In the desire for something freer, better, and greater, it was more natural to turn to the long neglected but recently discovered models of ancient and modern times than to develop something entirely original and novel. For it must not be forgotten that, whilst Lessing and Kant were the two great representatives of the critical spirit in the wider sense of the word, they were not essentially negative minds, and that they opposed the purely sceptical and destructive movement of which Voltaire in France was the most brilliant and popular exponent. Their object was not to destroy but to build up, to lead taste into new channels and to establish philosophy upon a firmer foundation; thus they were more attracted by Rousseau, his gospel of nature and his educational ideals, than by Voltaire, whose flippancy and artificiality were opposed to their innermost convictions. In fact, they had definite ideals. They initiated what we may call the age of ideals, which governed the German mind for the greater part of a century. It may have been difficult at that time to express in words what these ideals really consisted in, and more easy for their upholders to say what they were not, what they opposed and disapproved of. But Lessing and Kant had a strong faith in the existence of eternal standards of the true, the beautiful, and the good, and they strove for a general recognition and appreciation of them.

If, in the light of history and subsequent events, we ask ourselves the question what this ideal which they were striving after consisted in, we meet with an

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Ideal of
humanity:
its phases.