

date. A great authority on Spinoza, who, for the first time, put before the English public an exhaustive study of his personality and teachings, sums up his appreciation of this remarkable thinker in the words: "Spinozism, as a living and constructive force, is not a system but a habit of mind, and as science makes it plainer every day that there is no such thing as a fixed equilibrium either in the world without or in the mind within, so it becomes plain that the genuine and durable triumphs of philosophy are not in systems but in ideas. Wealth in vital ideas is the real test of a philosopher's greatness, and by this test the name of Spinoza stands assured of its rank among the greatest."¹

As these words express most clearly likewise the position which in this History I am taking up, not only to philosophical but also to scientific thought, it may be well to note here that the breaking up of the strict logical formalism introduced into German philosophy by Wolff, and continued by Kant, through the Spinozistic thought of viewing everything *sub specie aeternitatis*, marks one of the great characteristics not only of German Idealism but indeed of the whole of the classical and romantic literature in that country from 1780 up to 1840,—a characteristic which is totally absent in contemporary philosophical literature in France as well as in this country. English philosophers about the year 1860 began to make a serious study of modern German Idealism, starting with Hegel and going back to Kant as its origin. Twenty years later they recognised that

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¹ Sir Frederick Pollock, 'Spinoza: His Life and Philosophy,' 1st ed., p. 408.