

70.
Criticism
the common
meeting-
ground.

of Comte, Kant, Spinoza and Hegel; not till Germany on her part had recognised the originality of Comte and Spencer, and France had by renewed study of Kant assimilated in an independent manner the principles of the critical philosophy. It is thus that we find philosophical criticism to have become at the end of the century a common meeting-ground for the philosophical thought in all the three nations. It is the spirit of the Kantian philosophy, only that critical inquiry at the end of the nineteenth century starts from beyond the premises which seemed to afford a firm foundation and starting-point to Kant himself. The new science of Psychology, towards which England was the largest contributor, is now cultivated by international co-operation; as likewise the critical examination of the fundamental conceptions and axioms in the exact sciences is prosecuted with equal interest and success in Germany, France, and England. In these two original branches of modern criticism we see how a deeper level is being reached from which to start afresh on the solution of the critical problem formulated by Kant.

Compared with this international work of critical exploration, the constructive efforts in all three countries, though numerous, are nevertheless insignificant. If in the writings of the most eminent thinkers of to-day we were to strike out all that is purely historical, polemical, and critical, how little would remain! And yet in this small total of constructive effort we can distinguish in the contributions of the three nations that traditional bias which has in the past been characteristic of their philosophical attitudes. The English mind, whenever hopelessly