

those who would confine its speculations to the ultimate presuppositions and who despise *axiomata media* as external to the sphere in which it moves.”¹ It is quite true that there were exceptions, and that attempts had been made to build up coherent or monistic systems similar to those which abound in the nineteenth century; and this both with a materialistic tendency—as by Hobbes—and with that towards spiritualism—as by Berkeley. But these systematic attempts were disregarded and stood outside of the prevailing currents of philosophical thought. This was, in general, occupied with a discussion of special problems, and did probably more than either French or German philosophy to lead up to special philosophical sciences, such as Psychology, Logic, Theory of Method, Ethics, Economics, &c. Even the most influential and far-reaching discussions which mark an era in philosophical thought, those of David Hume, appeared in the form of essays which stimulated thought without exhausting their subject, and aimed as little at building up a systematic whole as they emanated from a *universitas scientiarum et literarum*. The opinion sometimes expressed by foreign historians of philosophy, that thinkers like Bacon, Locke, Newton, Mill, and others shrank, through timidity, from expressing their convictions regarding matters of faith or subjecting them to the same penetrating analysis which they practised with regard to science and natural knowledge, can hardly be upheld.² It was rather a correct and

15.
Dispersive
character of
earlier
British
thought

¹ Fraser, ‘Locke,’ p. 286.

² This opinion is, however, to some extent borne out by what John Stuart Mill tells us about his

father, James Mill, in a well-known passage of the ‘Autobiography,’ p. 43. “I am one of the very few examples, in this country, of one