

to bridge over the two regions of the inanimate and the animated creation. We know how in the beginning of the century these phenomena attracted great attention, and how, especially in the medical sciences, great importance was attached to electrical, magnetic, and galvanic forces. But, outside of this scientific interest in natural phenomena, nature itself as a whole had become an object of a new interest, not to say veneration, in all the three countries I am dealing with, from an artistic, literary, and poetical point of view. A return to nature was proclaimed and practised in many ways and took many forms: Rousseau in France was the exponent of one very prominent form of this modern naturalism. He opposed the artificiality of society and the logical aridity of eighteenth century life and thought. He became the founder and the greatest master in a peculiar form of poetical prose, which had an enormous influence on Continental literature. In this country Goldsmith, Gray, Cowper, and Burns represented a quite independent and less pretentious school of naturalism, which opened out an entirely new vein of poetical feeling and created new forms of poetical diction. Both these products of poetical and creative thought had a great influence on German literature. There, an independent contribution to this line of thought was given by Herder, who, in his studies on the problems of humanity, the origins of language and history, had recourse to the elemental forces of nature as conditioning and producing historical developments. He created an interest in primitive cultures and in the popular poetry and songs of nations all over the world. All these influences, that of