

that the ideas which govern the culture and progress of humanity cannot be logically deduced from some highest conception but that they must be patiently searched for; that they disclose themselves only to the diligent and painstaking student of historical facts and detail, and that they reveal themselves not so much explicitly as in and through the course of historical narrative and portraiture, refusing to be put into definite terms and language. Other representatives of this view followed Hegel in the main conception, but instead of adopting the abstract and spiritual view which Hegel took, fastened upon certain definite restricted historical factors and agencies, the workings of which they attempted to trace in limited periods and narrower regions of historical development. Some of these produced works which likewise, though in a very different direction, acquired European reputation, exerting a far-reaching though one-sided influence. To these I will revert further on.

Quite different from the tendency in what we may term the idealistic school of German historians was that which I have identified with the name of Comte. Comte did not believe that what lay, as it were, behind historical events and facts—what we may term the hidden or ideal content—could be found out by the human intellect; he did not absolutely deny that such existed, but it constituted, in his opinion, a region inaccessible to the human mind.

In the place, however, of the search for the ideal element Comte put another method. This consisted in the search for the *consensus* or *ensemble* of historical

51.
Comte's
search for
the *ensemble*.