

stimulus at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth through Kant, Fichte, and Schleiermacher, but it had fallen into the background during the exclusive sway of the metaphysical systems of Schelling, Hegel, and Herbart. When the spell of these systems was broken and the disintegration of philosophical thought had set in, two distinct interests asserted themselves: the Theory of Knowledge, on the one side, which reverted to Kant, and Practical Philosophy, or Ethics, on the other, which, to a great extent, abandoned the Kantian position and came under the influence of foreign, notably of English, thought. An attempt was then made to gain for Ethics a new foundation, independent alike of metaphysics and religious doctrine. In France, moral philosophy as such had practically no independent existence during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, and it is only within the last quarter that its problems have been taken up afresh; but since then, that country can claim to have produced some of the most remarkable and original works on the subject.

Moral philosophy, being thus much older in this country than abroad, grew up also in an entirely different atmosphere and environment, and this accounts for some of the traits which are peculiar to its growth and development. It will be of interest to realise how this environment differed from the conditions existing in the two other countries in which we are specially interested. There is one word which characterises the surroundings in which thinkers of this country have lived and worked ever since the Restoration, and

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