

for metaphysical inquiry in Germany, and, in this country alone, the endeavour to solve practical ethical questions as they presented themselves in the changing and complicated circumstances of a prosperous people. But though England thus offered more favourable conditions for the study of theory and practice in ethics than the Continental countries, it was nevertheless deficient in one important aspect which was common both to France and Germany; one important idea was wanting which in different ways then already guided both French and German thought, but entered only much later into the thought of this country. Here, however, it then assumed that expression through which it again powerfully reacted upon Continental thought, changing its entire character, and in the latter part of the nineteenth century rendering obsolete a very large part of all previous speculation. This is the idea of Development, announced by Leibniz a century earlier and independently developed by Lessing and Herder, by Schelling and Hegel in Germany, by Condorcet and Auguste Comte in France.

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Idea of  
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England.

Leaving out this important contribution to philosophical thought which is now acknowledged, if not exaggerated, in all three countries alike, and which in this country has become a leading force in popular philosophical reasoning through the canons and watch-words of the doctrine of Evolution, it must be admitted that, at the beginning of the century, ethical speculation was in this country already in full possession of an elaborate ethical vocabulary, testifying to the fact that British thought had recognised the ethical problem, the