

many times over by men representing all the different shades of the intellect of the nation, in and out of the Church, the Schools, and the Universities, with a practical or a theoretical bias and in a systematic as well as a controversial spirit. As much cannot be found in the literature of any other modern country, perhaps not even at the present day.

But though the ground was thus fairly covered, a great additional impetus was given to ethical speculation towards the end of the eighteenth century by a thinker whose interest was not pre-eminently and exclusively ethical, but who succeeded in bringing morals into immediate connection with practical legislation: this was Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). It is interesting to note that in Germany an equally important stimulus was given about the same time to ethical theory by an individual mind of quite a different order and in a totally different direction — namely, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804).¹

10.
Bentham.

In order to understand the nature and the causes of the great influence which the writings of Bentham and his disciples have exerted, we may dwell on two main points. The first was that Bentham formed, as it were, an exception to the general tone which prevailed among the better-known British writers on ethical subjects. He did not share — or shared only

¹ It may be noted that the three most original thinkers — Kant, Bentham, and Goethe — whose works appeared about the same time, and who in different directions influenced European thought most profoundly towards

the end of the eighteenth century, were quite unknown to each other, a circumstance which contrasts markedly with the state of intellectual intercourse a century later.