

unifying principle which would allow the phenomena of life to be mechanically explained and altruism to be deduced from egoism. To do this they had recourse to the principle of transformism, the potency of which had not been recognised by Comte himself. This led them to study more closely the philosophy of Evolution as it had been elaborated in this country by Darwin and Spencer.

The disciple of Comte who went the greatest length in this direction was Littré; but it was also much strengthened on one side by several eminent leaders in the natural and medical sciences, and on the other by two of the most brilliant writers of the last generation—Ernest Renan and Hippolyte Taine.¹ They introduced the positive spirit into history, æsthetics, and general literature, cultivating fields of research such as Psychology and Æsthetics, which had met with very insufficient attention in Comte's own writings. They emancipated positivism from Comtism, from the letter and canons of its founder's system, and it is doubtful how many of those who now so glibly use the term have ever read a line of the 'Philosophie Positive.'

But for philosophical thought in their country, Renan and Taine did more than this: they were quite as much students of Hegelianism as of Positivism; they combined

¹ "Hippolyte Taine, encore dominé, à vrai dire, par des théories métaphysiques, telles que le monisme logique de Spinoza ou de Hegel, après être descendu analytiquement des signes aux images, des images aux sensations et de celles-ci à leurs éléments constitutifs, qu'il trouvait dans des sensations élémentaires, homogènes

et imperceptibles, correspondant à des ensembles de réflexes du système nerveux, essayait, à partir de la sensation ainsi conçue, de reconstruire synthétiquement, sans rien emprunter qu' à l'expérience, tout le mécanisme de la connaissance." E. Boutroux in "La Philosophie en France"; 'Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale' (1908, p. 690).