

country these writings have formed a turning point in their mental development, imparting to their life and thought a steadfastness and tone which has never been forgotten, but has made it unnecessary for them to peruse or assimilate the voluminous abstract and systematic literature in which German philosophers have, as we have seen, grappled with the spiritual problem.

50.  
The British  
and the  
German  
mind.

In the attempt to characterise the difference which exists in the treatment of this problem in the two countries we may perhaps be allowed to state that, speaking broadly, that very spirit which Goethe found it so necessary to impart, and which he made the highest object of his educational system, the spirit of Reverence, has all through retained a greater hold on the British mind than either on the French or the German mind. In France the writings of Voltaire had, even before the Revolution, added a tone of flippancy and insincerity to that of impurity; and the Revolution itself had finally destroyed, among a large section of the middle and higher classes, the respect not only

This remarkable essay appeared as the introduction to a book called 'German Romance,' published in Edinburgh in 1827. It is reprinted in the 6th volume of the collected works (p. 366 *sqq.*), filling only a few pages. In these, the few lines (p. 375) containing the characterisation of Goethe, have probably not yet been surpassed, even in the enormous pertinent literature, German and foreign, which has appeared during this last eighty years since the death of Goethe, and which has had the advantage of

much wider knowledge of the subject than Carlyle could possibly possess. Especially in this country the appearance of Lewes' 'Life of Goethe' (1st ed., 1855), though adding no doubt very largely to the popular interest of the subject, has rather spoiled the impression afforded by Carlyle's characterisation as it dwelt much more upon the romance of Goethe's life than on the seriousness of his mind and the intrinsic value of his works and his thought.