

as hypocrisy and cant. Such may, indeed, exist to some extent, perhaps to a greater extent than in neighbouring continental countries, but it would be unjust not to recognise that this characteristic quality has its ground in the peculiar form of what may be called the popular logic of the English race. This logic requires always a large and well-established mass of facts wherewith to begin and whereon to rest its arguments. To what extent this sense for the factual and historical owes its existence and convincing power to the absence of any break in the continuity of the nation's history for a period of many centuries, combined with the insular compactness of social life and progress, may be difficult, if not impossible, to decide. There is, however, no doubt that it is distasteful to many thoughtful minds in this country to leave the region and level of clear facts in quest of the underlying causes and beginnings, or to abstract and vaporise them in favour of some supposed systematic construction. English thought, and notably English philosophical thought, is, therefore, intrinsically neither radical nor systematic. It has not developed that interest in either the substructures or the superstructures of reality which is so common among continental thinkers; with Descartes and Kant as representatives on the one side, with Hegel and Schopenhauer on the other.

51.
English
thought
neither
radical nor
systematic.

Neither the English nor the Scotch intellect will trust itself to the guidance of purely logical formulæ, or venture more than a few steps up or down the ladder of syllogism; for it is always in fear of losing in such ventures the grasp of that which constitutes the essence