

11.
Characteristic differences in the three literatures.

century than they are in our day, can be traced also in the way they consciously or unconsciously attacked this problem. French thinkers, who were probably the first in modern times to approach the subject, did so in a scientific spirit and upon the basis of a few simple generalisations which they attempted to work out logically; German thinkers progressed in a more speculative manner with a deeper appreciation of the vastness of the subject, which required, in their opinion, extensive research as well as speculative construction. English thought in the last instance was not as revolutionary as French thought nor as speculative as that of Germany, but it made the earliest successful attempts to deal patiently and elaborately with single restricted problems as they presented themselves through the work of the age and pressed for practical solution. These differences more or less disappeared in the course of the century, a term being introduced which enabled the various contributions of separate schools or isolated thinkers to crystallise into a definite problem. As a result of this a distinct science has sprung up under the name of sociology: this term was introduced by Comte in France. Though frequently found fault with, it has nevertheless now been accepted in the language and literature of all civilised countries. From being in the beginning a stranger and newcomer among the different members of the philosophical body, sociology has gradually usurped the central and leading position, and this under the influence of additional causes which it is important to explain somewhat more closely.

12.
Sociology;
Comte.

The first of these causes may be termed a theoretical