

represented by the philosophy of Kant in which the practical reason, with its supreme command—the categorical imperative—is elevated to the highest position in the world of thought, theoretical reason having been found incapable of affording the necessary foundation. The position taken up by Kant proved, however, to be unstable. Not only did Kant himself demonstrate how, in its further elaboration, his fundamental ethical conception necessarily implied the beliefs of the older theological system, but the term reason itself lost, in the subsequent idealistic systems of German philosophy, its individualistic and subjective meaning, becoming identified in Fichte with the Divine Order, in Schelling with the Absolute, and in Hegel with the World-Spirit.

Through the whole of this movement German philosophy, down to Feuerbach, stands in distinct opposition to French as well as to English philosophy. It was essentially theological, whereas French and English philosophy developed, in all their more original representatives, a distinctly sociological interest. There is, however, a marked difference between sociological speculation in France and England in the earlier half of the nineteenth century, as has been clearly pointed out by J. S. Mill, the greatest figure in the sociological movement of that period. As Mr Whittaker says,¹ “he and Comte started equally clear of theology from boyhood. Comte indeed was brought up as a Catholic; but he was thrown at school into the intellectual atmosphere of post-revolutionary France; and he himself relates that

17.
Kant's
position.

18.
Contrast
between
English and
French
sociology.

¹ “Comte and Mill,” by Thos. Whittaker, in Constable's ‘Philosophies Ancient and Modern’ (pp. 7, 8).