

in Ranke's writings is founded upon the philosophical and religious background of the age and the surroundings in which Ranke's genius matured, how he liberated himself from the systematising tendency of the philosophy as well as from the dogmatising tendency of the theology of his time, but how he nevertheless retains the spiritual aspect as it was contained, *e.g.*, in the writings of Fichte and still more in those of Luther. "Ranke was well aware that he possessed a kernel of solid convictions, but he never attempted a formally well-considered and detailed expression of this content; he never systematised it or tried to reconcile its possibly contradictory elements; he shrank from putting the innermost of his convictions into words. He ever goes only a certain length; the innermost remains undisclosed, like those groves in which the old Teutons considered the Deity to be directly active, and it is therefore similarly grasped only intuitively *sola reverentia*." ¹

In this respect Ranke occupies a position similar to that of Goethe. Such natures are wronged whenever one tries to construct from their scattered expressions, by hook or by crook, a rounded philosophical system; we can ever attempt only an indefinite indication of the essence of their views. Nevertheless Lamprecht finds Ranke's historical thought gathered up in two characteristic points: the idealistic creed after the manner of the then ruling philosophy, and the universalistic conception of history after the manner of the cosmopolitan character of the classical literature of

¹ Lamprecht, *op. cit.*, p. 31.