

position, for his own age, notably in France and in this country, had already given an entirely different direction to philosophy. For though von Hartmann stood himself under the influence of scientific research, his was not really a scientific philosophy, the scientific problem did not stand in the centre of his thought. The placing of it in that position was for the first time undertaken, not in Germany, but in this country and in France. The work was later on done likewise in Germany, as we shall have occasion to learn in the sequel of this chapter.

The thinker in whose system the scientific spirit gained for the first time the upper hand was Auguste Comte. But it would be a mistake to consider him as merely a representative of what in France is nowadays termed Positivism. With Comte Positivism meant essentially the reconstruction of society upon a new foundation, upon a foundation prepared and attained by the study of history as well as of science. Positivism, as at present understood by most of those who use the term in France, means simply the methods of the exact and natural sciences. The fact that the most important of Comte's writings, the 'Philosophie Positive,' was published as an independent work and separated from the 'Politique Positive,' has made it possible to eliminate, in the popular conception of Comtism, the most characteristic feature in the earliest and latest of his speculations. These deal with the practical application of his doctrine. With him the term Positivism is not confined, as it is in more recent times, to a

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Positivism
of Comte.