

Lotze himself had done, or as fanciful and half poetic creations. Here Fechner is the most original example. The lack of originality, combined with an increased accuracy, shows itself in the great predilection for historical studies, in the revival of older theories and systems, in the love of the past. In a similar manner this retrospective interest has shown itself wherever Art and Literature have left behind them an age of original production and the sources of inspiration seem for the time exhausted. Such phases in the history of thought or of artistic creation are characterised by minuteness of research, by formal excellence, by critical acumen, by elaboration of detail. They mark the twilight of the waning day which again, after the longer or shorter absence of the full light, may lead to the dawn of a new day. It is not the object of the historian to indulge in prophecies or fanciful anticipations; yet it is his duty to note whether his age shows any sign of revival and of the return of the creative faculty.

To this latter question I shall revert later on; in the meantime it is useful to note that the last generation, devoid as it has been of any distinct creative effort in philosophical thought, has been characterised by two generalised movements of thought, and this in all the three countries alike. The first of these tendencies has already been noted at the beginning of this Introduction; we may call it the reversion to common-sense. On this I need not at present dwell at any greater length, as the special forms which this general tendency has assumed in the different literatures and schools will

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Reversion
to common-
sense.