

60.
Materialism
of the
"Forties."

great practical achievement—the foundation of that great scheme of higher and popular education which other nations have found it impossible to imitate. When, however, after a considerable lapse of time, the outcome of the new philosophy proved to be delusive, when it failed to appreciate the growing importance of the Natural Sciences, when it entered into an alliance with the reactionary movement in politics and the intolerance of ecclesiastics, when finally it appeared that the canons of the Hegelian philosophy were used alike by the orthodox and by unbelievers, the popular interest and belief in this philosophy began to wane. For a moment it appeared as if the belief in Idealism might be replaced by that in Materialism: there is no doubt that a certain section of the intelligent public in Germany was, and still is, strongly imbued with and influenced by the teachings of the materialistic writers of the Forties. For the more thinking section these crude doctrines could, however, have no lasting attraction. At that moment there existed in Germany only two thinkers who might have met the much felt need of a new doctrine, namely, Lotze and Fechner. The causes which prevented either of them forming a school of followers will have our attention in the sequel of this History; perhaps it is sufficient to say here that neither of them, for different reasons, took up a clearly defined position, or summed up his teachings in an easily intelligible formula,¹ such as the speculative mind had been accustomed to find in

¹ Lotze was, in the beginning, quite misunderstood. His real position came out clearly only in his later writings; and as regards

Fechner, he was known at that time as a scientific writer and as a humourist under the pseudonym of Dr Mises.