

the earlier systems. A general scepticism settled upon men's minds, a deep-seated doubt as to the capacity of the human intellect to solve its highest problems. At the same time the failure of the theoretical politicians, which the events of the year 1848 had made only too evident, assisted in producing a general discouragement, so far as the highest practical, as well as intellectual, interests were concerned.

Under these circumstances the philosophy of Schopenhauer came to many younger minds as a kind of revelation. It was sufficiently speculative to satisfy the idealistic craving; it summed up its teaching in an intelligible formula; it supported its doctrines by a great wealth of artistic insight; and it contrasted favourably with the writings of Hegel by the elegance and lucidity of its literary style. Add to this, that it was highly spiced by brilliant and unsparing invective against the philosophers who had so long, by unfulfilled promises, led the nation astray; it was also the first attempt in Germany to drop, in the discussion of the highest problems, the professorial and academic tone, which to many practically minded people had assumed too much of self-assurance and the pride of infallibility. Unfortunately the theoretical principles of Schopenhauer's philosophy were, in their practical application to ethical problems, joined to a pessimistic view of the world and life. This had its origin in personal traits of character, and was fostered through the study of the philosophy of the East, then newly introduced into Europe. It was opposed to the spirit of Plato, which likewise influenced Schopenhauer, and it stands in no logical connection with

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Schopen-
hauer's
pessimism
an accident.