

centration in large cities has brought about has gradually become in general literature, as well as in philosophical, ethical, and religious writings, the great topic of the day.

The impossibility which not only philosophical theorists, but also religious workers, have experienced in dealing with this great problem, which we may, for the moment, call the salvation of society, has in this country brought about a widespread feeling of dismay, and deprived not only philosophical doctrines of their interest, but also religious beliefs of that hold which they once had on the minds of men. In Germany the older forms of religious belief had in the eighteenth century been largely superseded by rationalism; this again for a time looked as if it would yield to the deepening and spiritualising influence of the idealistic philosophy. But when the latter appeared to many to be uncertain in its results and delusive in its promises, a reaction set in which produced for a long time an indifferentism, not only towards religious, but also towards philosophical teaching. Add to this that the growing industrialism of the age, the commercial spirit, and the increasing wealth of the upper and middle classes, had found a convenient and comfortable popular philosophy in the shallow tenets of materialism. Thus we can say that philosophical thought of the highest order—*i.e.*, the intellectual search for the great Realities which underlie and sustain everything, the quest for the truly Real—has suffered bankruptcy, in Germany mostly through theoretical, in England through practical, causes. Nevertheless, it must be added that the very recognition of all these

64.  
Temporary  
decline of  
philosophic  
interest.