

general distrust and agnosticism with regard to the powers of the human mind, by any form of methodical thought, be it scientific or philosophical, to arrive at that certainty which, if not theoretically necessary, is at least practically indispensable in order to secure definite aims and steadfastness of purpose in practical life.

In dealing with the subject of this chapter,—the growth and diffusion of the critical spirit or of the spirit of free inquiry,—my readers will have noticed that only little reference has been made to the course which philosophical thought has taken outside of Germany. It is only through a few great names belonging to France and Great Britain, that in the course of the nineteenth century German thought has been influenced at all. This explains why the histories of modern philosophy which have appeared in Germany have up to quite recent times taken little notice of the contributions of French and English thinkers during the last hundred years. It is only since Auguste Comte's and Herbert Spencer's systems have become known in Germany that German students of philosophy have realised the fact that both England and France had developed systems of their own, which had but little, if any, contact with German thought. This is notably the case as regards the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, who professedly did not study the system of any other contemporaneous thinker, and, in fact, declared that he refrained from reading any philosophical work from which he found that he differed on perusal of the first pages. Nothing is more striking than that the author

63.
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