

9.
Effect of the
French
Revolution.

broke out in France, and brought with it more definite social and political problems. Fichte's first writings of importance referred to the religious problem and to the social problem. It was only after he had gained a considerable reputation through these writings that he found it necessary to lay a deeper foundation for his speculations by dealing with the fundamental problems approached by Kant. This was the origin of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. But what Fichte would have called the purely scientific and logical treatment of the fundamental question of knowledge was very soon interrupted by the influence of the creative, in opposition to the critical, spirit which sprang up in German literature, poetry, and art, and attained its greatest sway during his Jena period.

When, half a century later, the general interests of literature and science had undergone a great change in the direction of Realism, when the creative spirit had exhausted itself, we find philosophical thinkers approaching once more the problem of knowledge. But this time it is not the belief in an ideal world which strives for philosophical grasp and expression, but rather the new and rapidly growing region of knowledge opened out by the natural sciences and their exact mathematical treatment. It is no more the logic of the autonomous, nor that of the creative human mind, but the logic of patient observation and mathematical reasoning that is required; in fact, the ideas of knowledge have undergone a great change. The exact sciences begin to assume the position of types and models of the most perfect human knowledge, which the philosophical theory tries to understand,

10.
Later
dominance
of exact
science.