

of Reality full in the face. He does not shirk the task of finding an answer to the outstanding problem of Kant's philosophy: What is the "Thing in itself"?¹

Ignoring the complicated nature of the problem—which results from the fact that in discussing the question of the difference of the subjective and the objective side of reality, each individual mind mixes up what is its own inner experience with what it knows by considering itself, as it were, as one of the many persons which exist around it—Schopenhauer treats the problem of the Thing in itself in its most abstract form. Starting from the statement that our own self is certainly a reality, he maintains that we must be able to find within ourselves the essence of reality, the nature

Herbart. With the latter the central interest was the ethical, and through this he had a genuine understanding for Kant and Fichte, especially for Fichte's personality, though he soon developed a marked aversion to the constructive attempts of the earlier, and the mysticism of the later, form of Fichte's speculation.

¹ Schopenhauer in philosophy, like Goethe in literature and life, seems through external circumstances to have been at liberty to choose his career without what are usually termed pressing worldly considerations. He was thus, of all the thinkers of that period, the only one who came to philosophy with no other interest. This is shown in an interesting anecdote of an interview which took place, about the year 1811, between him and the aged poet Wieland. When Wieland tried to dissuade Schopenhauer from following the philosophical career, the student of twenty-three replied to him: "Life

is an awkward affair: I have resolved to pass my life in thinking about it." This answer impressed the aged poet so much that he recognised in him the born philosopher. When, shortly after, he met Schopenhauer's mother at Court, he addressed her as follows: "I have lately made a highly interesting acquaintance! Do you know with whom? with your son. I was delighted to see this young man; something great will some day become of him" (see Kuno Fischer, 'Arthur Schopenhauer,' 1893, p. 29). Schopenhauer was in other respects the very opposite of Herbart, who was driven to philosophy through an early interest in education and the desire to be a teacher, a vocation which Schopenhauer only tried for a short time when his pecuniary independence seemed threatened, and which he very soon abandoned in order to devote himself exclusively to the working out of his System.