

the surface; it is not explicitly stated, it must be implied rather than defined. The great object of our life and labour has not been clear to us, as it seemed clear to those who lived during the Reformation or the Revolution, otherwise we should not have philosophies of the Unconscious and of the Unknowable, and the century would not end in asking, Is life worth living?

Then, again, we find in history long periods of quiet development, where men's minds seemingly run very much in the same direction, exhibiting a general tendency of ideas, the spreading of a defined habit of thought and of simple methods, the application of a few principles: such a period was that preceding the French Revolution, the greater part of the eighteenth century. It has therefore been easy to characterise that century: it has been termed the philosophical century, the century of the *Aufklärung*, the century of Voltaire.<sup>1</sup> No such one

<sup>1</sup> The first who reviewed the literature of the eighteenth century from an international point of view was Villemain, who as early as 1820 was engaged in lecturing at the Sorbonne before the *élite* of the rising literary generation of France on the literature of the eighteenth century, taking France as the centre, and showing the influence of foreign literature, especially English, as likewise the reaction of French ideas abroad. He was too early to recognise the true meaning of the new spirit which had then already gone forth from Germany. In this respect his 'Cours de Littérature française,' published in 1828 and republished in 1864, remains incomplete. Schlosser next attempted to present in his 'Geschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts,' after the manner of Gibbon, a picture of the combined

political and literary work of the last century. The first draft of it appeared in 1824, after Schlosser had passed two years in Paris, where no doubt he must have come under the influence of Villemain. The work itself began to appear in 1826, and was finished in 1848. It is considered to be Schlosser's greatest work, and had a large circulation. The connection of political and literary history was studied by Gervinus, who with Häusser is usually counted as a pupil of Schlosser. But the great work which Villemain had begun and Schlosser taken up was adequately carried out by Hettner, who in his 'Literaturgeschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts' conceived the whole intellectual movement of that age as a battle for enlightenment (*Kampf der Aufklärung*). The