

the time of Leibniz, and had been heightened by the productiveness of art and literature during the classical period and the enthusiasm of the anti-Napoleonic revolt, had been followed by widespread discouragement and indifference which prepared many youthful minds for a pessimistic view of life and its goods. This view found a speculative formula and brilliant exposition in the systems of Schopenhauer and von Hartmann. The writings of the former had been before the world for more than forty years. The time seemed now to have arrived for an appreciation of ideas which were quite foreign to the spirit of the classical period, but which were not unfamiliar to the leaders of a section of the opposition literature, such as had sprung up, all over Europe, as a consequence of the Revolution and the subsequent reaction, with the celebrated names of Byron in England, de Musset in France, Leopardi in Italy, and Heinrich Heine in Germany.

Feuerbach had already clearly recognised that it was the practical and not the metaphysical problem which was most pressing, — questions which interested the masses even more than the educated classes. But his whole literary activity moved too much on the purely destructive side and, like a great deal of the literature of the day, was too easily satisfied with mere outlines, with sketchy programmes of the creed of the future, to yield any positive gain. Consistent constructive efforts dealing with the many difficulties in the working out of the various schemes were to be found chiefly among writers who still maintained the ground of traditional belief. Of the latter, who belong mostly to the school