

Viewed in this light, the more important works of English philosophers, leaving out those which cluster around the name of Herbert Spencer, may be said to be occupied with the problem of the Spirit, with establishing the spiritual view of things. But, as already stated, this whole tendency had not at the end of the century resulted in any great consummation;<sup>1</sup> it has not succeeded in concentrating its teaching in definite ideas, expressed in appropriate language, such as can compel the attention of a large number of thinking persons, giving a definite direction to the thought of the age and something substantially new whereon and where-with to construct a reasoned creed. Such formulæ and watchwords, without which no current of thought ever flows in great volume and with decisive force, have rather been the intellectual product of the Positivist and Naturalistic schools of thought which, notably under the banner of evolution—with a distinctly mechanical interpretation—still held at the end of our period the first place in popular esteem. The idealistic, or rather the spiritualistic, tendencies form, in opposition to this, a deep undercurrent which may in the near future gain the upper hand, but which, at the moment, is still doing preparatory work; partly by destructive criticism of the opposite view, partly by isolated contributions of a more constructive character. Among the latter we find in this country the discussion turning around the same

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Absence of  
definite  
ideas com-  
parable with  
those of  
Naturalism.

<sup>1</sup> An indication of what has been done about and since the end of the century, in the direction of more constructive work, will be attempted in the final chapter of this volume.