

hopeful of bringing about, by patient and enlightened reforms, that liberty which the French Revolution had attempted to gain by more violent methods, but had to a large extent lost again. This confidence of the human mind in its own resources, be they speculative, scientific, or practical, was confirmed and heightened by new creations and discoveries in literature, poetry, art, and science, by a revival of the religious spirit in England which for a long time obscured the hidden influences of Hume's scepticism, and by the educational interest in Germany and Switzerland. The latter combined with religious inwardness Rousseau's belief in the inherent goodness of human nature.

This hopefulness which characterised European thought till far on into the nineteenth century received its first great blow through the reactionary movement in French thought. It was aggravated by the disillusionment of the speculative mind in Germany towards the middle of the century, when the resources of idealism failed, and the belief in them was replaced by a belief in the methods and principles of science on the one side, of historical research and criticism on the other. An arrogant materialism set in, which lacked the originality as well as the literary graces so characteristic of the writings of the French encyclopædists two generations earlier. This, as also the slow and changing processes through which the historical schools matured their results, tended to weaken the belief in the powers of human reason to arrive at any certainty at all, and prepared younger minds in Germany for the reception of that pessimistic view which was brilliantly developed in the writings of

15.
Loss of confidence in the powers of the human mind.