

as another school of thinkers maintains, then the philosophical problem presents itself as to the source of certitude in matters of faith. The mediating task of philosophical thought cannot be undertaken till the questions have been answered: knowledge or no knowledge? certainty or no certainty? something that is intrinsically good and valuable or a mere semblance and passing illusion? Philosophically expressed, it is the problem of the Absolute. As to the existence of this the beginning of the century harboured no doubt, the end of the century, the present age, has no certainty.

18.
Retrospect.

In the third part of the general Introduction to this Work I indicated the position which I would assign to philosophy in the 'History of Nineteenth Century Thought.' It was to occupy an intermediate position between scientific and religious thought; its principal task being to effect a reconciliation between these two regions — the region of methodical knowledge on the one side, and the region of personal convictions on the other. Upon this, as it would seem to many, modest task of mediating between, or reconciling, two distinct aspects of thought, philosophy has only retired during the second half of the century. At the end of the eighteenth, and through the greater part of the first half of the nineteenth century, the pretensions of philosophy, at least in Germany, were of a much higher order. It was nothing less than the attempt to elevate subjects of Faith into subjects of Knowledge. This involved two distinct assumptions which the present age is not generally prepared to allow. The first assumption is: the existence of a distinct and tolerably