

indulged in the extreme version of Feuerbach and the popular materialists in Germany; nevertheless they provoked a desire on the part of an opposite school of thought to give a more idealistic expression to the current idea of development, now become popular under the term Evolution.

This idealistic interpretation of the principle of development, the search for origins and the genesis of things, they found fully alive in the historical studies of German and French scholars, and much of this was seen to have been stimulated by the idealistic school of thought of which Hegel stood out as the last and greatest representative.

18.  
Reaction  
under the  
influence of  
Hegel.

The central philosophy of Hegel thus became a subject in the studies of this school. It gave an answer to a question which, on closer scrutiny, was found to be ignored in the naturalistic conception, for it became evident that in that conception neither the subject nor the object of the process was defined or at all intelligible. For the purposes of natural science, of the scientific connection of things and events in time and space, the statement of a process was sufficient, but the philosophical mind desires to go a step further: What is the beginning and the end of this process? What is the power that started it, and what is its end and aim? To these questions the Evolutional system of Hegel gave a definite answer. The power underlying all, or the Absolute, is, according to Hegel, Spirit or Mind, and the purpose of the process which can be traced in the ascending stages of thought is self-realisation.

Thinkers in this country set themselves accordingly to