

able, and the many shorter and longer notices have been—with one exception—so appreciative, that I feel bound to express my sincere thanks to both readers and reviewers. Some remarks have, however, been made which prove that the plan as well as the main argument of the work has not always been fully understood. The reason for this is no doubt to be found in the book itself and the incompleteness of its execution. And one of the objects I have in view in publishing the present Treatise is to give a reply to some of the very pertinent questions which have been put to me both in public notices and in private correspondence.

After a sustained but frequently interrupted occupation with philosophical studies during more than twenty years of my life, I finally, about the year 1882, fixed upon a definite subject and the title of a work which should embody the main result of the labours of a lifetime.

The first object I had in view was purely personal—it was the desire to satisfy myself as to the principal changes which had come over European Thought in the course of the nineteenth century, showing, if possible, what amount of unity and consistency had been arrived at in the three principal literatures with which I was acquainted. I thought this a necessary though laborious and absorbing preparation for the further personal object I had in view—viz., a clearer definition of my own philosophical position. But as it did not seem to me to be right to follow this out