

the thoughts which stirred it.<sup>1</sup> It is the object of these volumes to fix, if possible, this possession; to rescue from oblivion that which appears to me to be our secret property; in the last and dying hour of a remarkable age to throw the light upon the fading outlines of its mental life; to try to trace them, and with the aid of all possible information, gained from the written testimonies or the records of others, to work them into a coherent picture, which may give those who follow some idea of the peculiar manner in which our age looked upon the world and life, how it intellectualised and spiritualised them. This attempt is therefore not a history of outward political changes or of industrial achievements: the former will probably be better known to our children than they have been to us; the latter will soon be forgotten as such, or incorporated in the still greater results of the future, for which they will be the preparation. Nor is it a history of Knowledge and Science, of Literature and Art, which I purpose to write; though as these are the outcome of the inner life, and contain it, so to say, in a crystallised form, they will always have to be appealed to for the purpose of verifying the conclusions which we may arrive

20.  
Object of  
this work  
to retrace  
the life of  
Thought  
through the  
dying cen-  
tury.

21.  
Not a politi-  
cal history,  
nor a history  
of Science,  
Literature,  
and Art.

<sup>1</sup> On the division of History into centuries see what Du Bois-Reymond says ('Reden,' Leipzig, 1886, vol. i. p. 519), and the fuller discussion of the subject by Prof. O. Lorenz, 'Die Geschichts-wissenschaft' (Berlin, 1886, p. 279 sqq.) The latter refers to what the first historian says (Herodotus, ii. 142: Καίτοι τριηκόσιοι μὲν ἀνδρῶν γενεαὶ δυνέονται μύρια ἕτεα· γενεαὶ γὰρ τρεῖς ἀνδρῶν ἑκατὸν ἕτεά ἐστι). A person born in 1840 can claim to have a personal knowledge of the last

half, and through his parents and teachers a knowledge of the first half, of the century. In this way it may be said that his personal—direct or indirect—knowledge extends over nearly a century. Lorenz says correctly: "Für jeden einzelnen bildet der Vater und der Sohn eine greifbare Kette von Lebensereignissen und Erfahrungen." And that this applies even more to ideas and opinions, to Thought, than to events and facts, is evident.