

this subject is by the limits of time and space which I have mentioned, it is, nevertheless, still vast, intricate, and bewildering. And yet it is my intention, throughout the inquiries which I have to institute and in the various outlines and sketches which I have to draw, never to lose sight of the unity of the whole. This unity, I maintain, the progress of our age has more and more forced upon us. It is itself a result of the work of the century. A hundred years—even fifty years—ago, it would have been impossible to speak of European Thought in the manner in which I do now. For the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries mark the period in which, owing to the use of the several vernacular languages of Europe in the place of the mediæval Latin, thought became nationalised, in which there grew up first the separate literature and then the separate thought of the different civilised countries of Western Europe. Thus it was that in the last century, and at the beginning of this, people could make journeys of exploration in the region of thought from one country to another, bringing home with them new and fresh ideas. Such journeys of discovery, followed by importation of new ideas, were those of Voltaire¹ to England in 1726, where he found the philosophy of Newton and Locke, at that time not known and therefore not popularly appreciated in France; the journey of Adam Smith in 1765 to France, where he became acquainted with the economic system of Quesnay and the opinions of the so-called “physiocrats,” which formed the starting-point of his own great work,

26.
Unity of
Thought a
product
of this
century.

27.
Voltaire.

28.
Adam
Smith.

¹ For a most complete collection of data referring to this subject see Du Bois-Reymond's address in the Berlin Academy, 30th January 1868, reprinted in the collection of his 'Reden,' Leipzig, 1886, vol. i.