

fused in the course of our century, and so far as the greater volume of ideas is concerned, we can speak now of European thought, when at one time we should have had to distinguish between French, German, and English thought. Reserving, therefore, in the meantime the task of investigating what still, within the bounds of this larger international life, remains peculiar to the thought of each nation, it is the great body of common European thought with which I propose at first to deal. How has it grown to be what it is now, what special contributions have the several nations made to the general stock, what is at present our inventory of it, how has it been changed in course of the century? But how, it may be asked, are we to take stock? how is this inventory to be drawn up? There is indeed one very obvious method which presents itself, though it is not the one which I propose to use exclusively, or even largely. And yet it seems to me well worthy of special attention.

37.
The light
which Etymology
throws on
history of
Thought,

Already I have remarked how the changes of thought are deposited in the altered language and style of the age. A closer study of the changes which, in the course of this century, have taken place in the vocabularies as well as in the styles of the three principal European languages would no doubt reveal to a great extent when and how new ideas have presented themselves, how they have become fixed and defined in special words or terms. It would allow us to trace to a very large extent not only the growth of the general stock of European thought, but also the migration of single ideas from one nation to another. And, lastly, it would exhibit to a great extent in what peculiar phrases, in what secluded corners, the

38.
and on the
migration
of ideas.