

appeared; the second half of our century does not expect to find the essence of knowledge condensed in any philosophical formula, any more than it expects to find the real unity and integrity of thought preserved in the fragmentary articles of an alphabetical dictionary. The purpose of the latter is purely practical; it is a popular and handy instrument for the diffusion of knowledge, whilst philosophical divisions are merely formal, and at best are applicable only to a narrow and limited sphere of research.<sup>1</sup>

The age of encyclopædic representation of learning and the short period of philosophical formalism seem both to belong to the past; but the desire of bringing together what is scattered, of focussing knowledge and learning, and of realising the organic continuity and unity of thought and progress, is as great as, perhaps greater than ever. Neither the shapelessness of a huge dictionary nor the barrenness of a concise formula will satisfy the

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to observe the development and spread of encyclopædic learning in the three countries. Encyclopædias in the modern sense have their origin, like so many other modern institutions and ideas, in England. They were there compiled mainly for practical purposes. France took up the scheme in a philosophical spirit, and carried it as far as it is capable of being carried under this aspect. Attempts to improve and amplify the plan proved impracticable; and when subjected to the vast erudition of Germany, it became evident that unity, depth, and breadth of view could not be maintained. In course of this century the country which produced the classical era

of encyclopædism has done least for encyclopædic learning. This has now its home in Germany, where encyclopædic labours have been specialised, and where every science is represented by some compilation or annual register aiming at collecting and systematically arranging the scattered contributions of the whole world. But it would be ungrateful not to mention the Royal Society's catalogue of scientific papers, and the services which America has rendered in summarising the literary productions of the English-speaking nations in such works as Poole's 'Index to Periodical Literature.' Without the aid of such laborious compilations the present work could not have been undertaken.