

25.
Herbert
Spencer the
first Eng-
lishman who
has pro-
duced a
system of
philosophy.

26.
Definition
of Lotze's
system.

and have almost dislodged systematic philosophy, England has for the first time in her history produced a system of philosophy—that of Mr Herbert Spencer; and this with the distinct understanding that the object of philosophy is the unification of knowledge.¹ It is a remarkable fact, which will occupy our close attention hereafter, that the unifying principle in this system is historical,—a process of development now specially known under the term Evolution. This system forms in a certain way a contrast to the last great system in German philosophy, that of Hermann Lotze. Whereas in all systems of evolution the unity of things is historical, and has to be sought in their common origin, Lotze emphasised the truth that unity must be a living presence, a principle which exists in individual things, not merely a link which connects them by proximity in time or space. His object is to answer the question, How can the human mind represent to itself such a living unity, in what ideas

¹ See G. H. Lewes ('Problems of Life and Mind,' 1st ed., vol. i. p. 84), who says: "The absence of a philosophy in England during the last two hundred years has been a serious defect in her culture. Science she has had, and poetry and literature, rivalling when not surpassing those of other nations. But a philosophy she has not had, in spite of philosophic thinkers of epoch-making power. Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, have produced essays, not systems. There has been no noteworthy attempt to give a conception of the world, of man, and of society, wrought out with systematic harmonising of principles. There has not been an effort to systematise the scattered labours of isolated

thinkers. Mr Herbert Spencer is now for the first time deliberately making the attempt to found a philosophy." And in his 'History of Philosophy' (3rd ed., vol. ii. p. 653) the same author says: "Mr Spencer alone of British thinkers has organised a system of philosophy." Croom Robertson would take exception to this in favour of Hobbes, "who attempted a task which no other adherent of the 'mechanical philosophy' conceived—nothing less than such a universal construction of human knowledge as would bring Society and Man within the same principles of scientific explanation as were found applicable to the world of Nature" (Ency. Brit., 9th ed., vol. xii. p. 39).