

of mental progress of which I have been able to take personal notice and of which I have felt the immediate personal influence. A tracing as concisely as possible of this comparatively small portion of the course of European thought may be the first approximation to more accurate delineations, which themselves will be the means of gradually gaining a truer idea of the purport and significance that belong to the larger dimensions of the mental life of mankind.

This life does not consist in the accumulated knowledge of our century, not in the results of scientific inquiry deposited in libraries and museums, not in the many schools for learning and study, not in educational and social reforms, least of all in political and economic institutions. These are all external objects, which are capable of being described or photographed like the external objects of nature. The mental life of mankind consists in the inner processes of reflection, by which these external objects have been produced, by which man has been able to add to the physical creation of nature a new creation of his own, by which he has been able to change the face of the earth, and endow the objects of nature with an ideal meaning. To this end he is always inventing and using methods which change, suggesting and applying principles which turn out to be half true or totally fallacious, guessing at results and aims which have to be abandoned, inventing theories which are short-lived—in fact, erecting scaffoldings with the help of which he raises the structures of Society, Art, and Science: these remain as the historical testimonies of his activity; the scaffoldings are removed as of merely transient and temporary value; and yet they

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What the
mental life
of mankind
consists of.