

the dignity of a general rule of thought. A third may, accidentally, be interested in two or more pursuits which are seemingly unconnected, but which—being brought side by side in his mind—he feels the wish to unite and harmonise. A fourth may, at a certain time of life, grow tired of the drudgery of petty pursuits which never carry him beyond a very limited sphere of interests: he is tempted to look beyond this narrow range, and gain some wider view of other pursuits and interests. Allowing that ignorance or indifference prevents even the majority of those whose powers are not exhausted in the struggle for mere existence from looking much beyond their narrow circle, allowing also that many of us live—like children—in a blessed trust that the great and important interests of mankind are under higher and better guidance than we can understand or control, there still remain a considerable number of persons who are always on the look-out for something higher, wider, and better, who are driven by an undying thirst after real wisdom, or by an inherent restlessness of disposition to inquire into the deepest foundations and the ultimate ends of the world and life. Language has coined a word which denotes the whole of these occupations and endeavours, how various so ever they may be, and for whatsoever purpose they may be undertaken. It calls them speculations. The word also indicates the venturesome and risky nature of these undertakings. They have existed in all ages and countries and languages wherever literature has existed, and have been carried on by the powers of reason or imagination, in prose, verse, or symbol, sometimes in defined and clear terms, more often in mystic allegory. Philosophy may be

9.  
Speculation.