

great elemental forces, heaved up by an earthquake or visited by a destructive storm. We see some persons employed in filling up great breaches and recently made rents, others trying to lay new foundations; others again are fighting for their possession or trying to divide a disputed territory; even the peaceful workers are called out to help in the battle, or disturbed by the complaints of their neighbours, on whose ground they are trespassing unawares, whose foundations they are unconsciously undermining. If we inquire into the cause of this unrest and anxiety, which seems to be a feature common to nearly all the phases of nineteenth-century thought, we must look back to the age which immediately preceded it. It is the storm of the revolution which passed over Europe, and shook to the foundation all political and social institutions, that has likewise affected our ideas and thoughts in every direction. The period we refer to has thus not incorrectly been termed a century of revolution. If in spite of this I decline to consider nineteenth-century thought as essentially revolutionary, it is because the work of destruction belongs in its earlier and more drastic episodes to the preceding age. The beginning of our period witnesses everywhere the desire to reconstruct, either by laying new foundations or by reverting to older forms of thought and life which it tries to support by new arguments or to enliven by a fresh interest and meaning. We may say that the thought of the century in its practical bearings is partly radical, partly reactionary,—meaning by the former all those constructive attempts which try to go to the root of things and to build up on newly prepared ground; by

28.
Cause of it
seen in the
century of
revolution
preceding it.

29.
Nineteenth-
century
thought
not revolu-
tionary.

30.
Thought of
this century
partly radi-
cal, partly
reaction-
ary.