

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

I.

IN the course of this history I have had occasion to characterise nineteenth century thought by various epithets. Two of them have been prominent. I have in the first part called the nineteenth century, so far as its thought is concerned, the Scientific century. And secondly, in the present portion of my narrative which deals with philosophical thought I have called the nineteenth century the Critical century. I shall now introduce the problem with which this chapter will deal by calling the nineteenth century the Æsthetical century. I wish to emphasise the difference between æsthetical and artistic as, in itself, characteristic of modern thought. An age or a nation may be called artistic which produces great works of art; an age may be called æsthetic which writes and talks about them.

1.
The Æsthe-
tical cen-
tury.

In spite of the fact that a great deal has been done during the nineteenth century to diffuse a love and understanding of art, I do not think that anyone would venture to call the nineteenth century an artistic