

century. Other centuries belonging to the ancient world, or to the transition from the middle ages to modern times, might lay claim to be called the artistic periods of history. The nineteenth century can set up no such claim. Though it has produced an enormous volume of poetry and art, and has certainly excelled in musical composition, it might perhaps rather deserve the name of the inartistic century; so much has been done, through the growth of industries and by the congestion of teeming masses of population, to destroy the natural beauty which was to be found almost everywhere before steam and electricity usurped the leading place as features and agencies of intercourse and civilisation. It may be that the very recognition of this has prompted a large part of the writings and speculations about art, not infrequently with a desire to bring back again what has been lost.¹

¹ The larger portion of the writings on art will not be dealt with in this chapter, nor in this section of the 'History of European Thought.' That portion goes usually under the name of Criticism; to it I referred in the second chapter of this section. In the narrower sense, as cultivated traditionally in France, it owes its diffusion and influence mainly to the growth of periodical literature, and is sometimes identified with literary taste. As such, its History has been written by Prof. George Saintsbury, whose 'History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe' (3 vols., 1900-1904) seems to be the only comprehensive and complete treatise on the subject. The author marks off his province from that of textual and higher Criticism on the one side, and refuses, on the other,

to "meddle with the more transcendental Æsthetic, with those ambitious theories of Beauty, and of artistic Pleasure in general, which, fascinating and noble as they appear, have too often proved cloud-Junos" (vol. i. p. 3). He proposes to go to work entirely *a posteriori*, and "except on the rarest occasions when it may be safe to generalise," confines himself "wholly to the particular and the actual" (p. 4). So far, therefore, as the nineteenth century is concerned, his review of that period takes no note of what specially interests us in the present chapter—viz., the different philosophical theories of the Beautiful. On the other side he deals with many works and authors of which I shall make no mention. This refers pre-eminently to what has been written