

æsthetical theory in the writings of such thinkers as Schleiermacher, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Steinthal, and other pioneers in the general science of Language.

68.
Schleier-
macher.

He sees the merit of Schleiermacher in exactly those points of which other historians disapprove. "Schleiermacher," he says, "distinguishes a form of thought which is different from logical thought; he has given æsthetics a non-metaphysical, a purely anthropological character; he destroys the conception of the Beautiful in order to replace it by that of artistic perfection, going even so far as to maintain that a small work of art and a large one, if each is perfect in its own line, are æsthetically equal; he has considered the æsthetical phenomenon as an exclusively human activity; and so forth. . . . In the midst of the metaphysical orgy of his age, in the construction and destruction of systems more or less arbitrary, the theologian Schleiermacher, as a true philosopher, has directed a penetrating glance on what is truly characteristic in the æsthetical phenomenon. . . . By pointing to the obscure region of immediate consciousness as that belonging to the æsthetical process, he seems to be saying to his bewildered contemporaries: *Hic Rhodus hic salta.*"¹ Further on, Signor Croce points to the fact that, at the very time when Schleiermacher's meditations remained unrecognised, a fundamentally novel aspect was gradually being gained by German thinkers as to the nature of language. He shows how Wilhelm von Humboldt regards language "not as a piece of work, an *ergon*, but as an activity, an energy, being the eternally repeated labour of the mind to render

¹ B. Croce, 'Esthétique,' p. 322 *sqq.*