

tries to describe the general mechanism *under* which, the latter the individual steps and incidents *by* which, special events or phenomena proceed and are characterised. Earlier chapters of this narrative attempted to give an account of the former, whilst the essentially historical treatment belongs to another portion of the work. The word history has generally been reserved for records which deal with those events in which human consciousness has played a large, if not an overwhelming, part, and has been able to assist the observer by its own accounts and representations. What should we know of human life and human interests without them, and how helpless—in spite of minutest observation—do we still appear to be in understanding the life of the brute and mute creation, even of the domestic animals, our daily friends and companions? But if history, as opposed to statistics, really seems only possible where the living voice or the surviving narrative of those who have departed helps us to a true understanding of its incidents and its meaning, it also imposes upon us the task of sifting its value and trustworthiness critically. Mathematics, logic, and statistics may do something to exclude the actually impossible or the highly improbable from a vast mass of material; but more delicate criteria are required in dealing with the accumulated testimony of bygone ages. With an unerring instinct of what, in addition to mathematical measurements, may be required in order to accomplish this task, the nineteenth century has not only nursed the scientific spirit and cultivated its methods, but with equal diligence and originality those other methods which lie at the foundation of