

NEW WORK IN PSYCHOLOGY

I. METHOD

THE present half century seems to be bringing a new colouring into human interests everywhere: a colouring which has appeared, it is true, in patches in the history of thought and action ever since the light of the eleventh century threw over Europe the grotesque shadows of the scholastic era, but which, in our day alone, has become the prevailing medium of our vision. So prevailing, indeed, has the new method become, and so customary to us that it is only by historical study that we are able either to see that it is new, or to work ourselves into that degree of intellectual sympathy for the old which the earnest endeavour and unflagging patience of the heroes of philosophy in the past rightfully demand for all time. To say that this is the age of science is only to repeat what is now trite and what no student either of philosophy or of history needs to be told. It is the age of science because it is the age of devotion to science and of results in science. But, it is a very different thing to say that this is the age of scientific method. Former ages have seen devotion to science and results in science, but we venture to say that no former age has, as an age, realized a scientific method. We say, as an age, because it is human thought and life as a single organism or development that we wish to characterize, its sweeping tendency and not its eddies—its colour and not its spots.

In characterizing our time by the word scientific, as regards method, we mean to say something which is true in philosophy, politics, literature, as well as in the investigation of nature; and to dwell only on the department of thought in which such a method has been, and is, most difficult to realize. In philosophy it is not fully realized; and yet we believe that