

xxii THE BRITISH BARBARIANS

fact that opinion is the agency through which character adapts external arrangements to itself—that his opinion rightly forms part of this agency—is a unit of force, constituting, with other such units, the general power which works out social changes ; and he will perceive that he may properly give full utterances to his innermost conviction ; leaving it to produce what effect it may. It is not for nothing that he has in him these sympathies with some principles and repugnances to others. He, with all his capacities, and aspirations, and beliefs, is not an accident, but a product of the time. He must remember that while he is a descendant of the past, he is a parent of the future ; and that his thoughts are as children born to him, which he may not carelessly let die. He, like every other man, may properly consider himself as one of the myriad agencies through whom works the Unknown Cause ; and when the Unknown Cause produces in him a certain belief, he is thereby authorised to profess and act out that belief. For, to