

This attitude has almost disappeared in the philosophical literature of our day; most philosophical writers have lost the "magnet of their course"; hence the anarchy of opinions and the labyrinthine meanderings of modern philosophical thought to which I referred above. They do not write philosophy; they write about philosophy or philosophical subjects.<sup>1</sup>

This state of things has been brought about by the workings of the critical spirit. It will be one of the main objects of the following pages to show how criticism has undermined one after the other of the foundations upon which former systems have built, how it has destroyed the central ideas from which emanated the light that illuminated the speculations of former ages.

11.  
Sapping  
effect of  
critical  
spirit.

"For who, without some far-off light, his own soul ponders o'er,  
Is like the bark that compassless would reach a distant shore."

Just as the question presented itself above: Why has philosophical thought not availed itself of the methods of science which have given so much definiteness and assurance? we may now put the reverse question: Why has the critical spirit, which has had such free access to every department of knowledge and thought, not wrought similar havoc in the regions of

necessity of complementing the analytical process, the "esprit d'analyse," by a synoptical process, the "esprit d'ensemble." To this I have drawn attention in a paper published in the 'Proceedings of the Philosophical Society of the University of Durham,' vol. iii., entitled "On a General Tendency of Thought in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century"; see also

'Edinburgh Review,' April 1911. I shall revert to this subject at the close of the present section.

<sup>1</sup> I have adopted this distinction from a remark made by the late Professor Sylvester regarding the mathematical writings of Augustus de Morgan. He said—whether justly or unjustly—that De Morgan did not write mathematics, but about mathematics.