

12.
How has
science
escaped?

science, how is it that science has escaped the ravages of the critical spirit? The answer to this question will introduce us to another large department of the philosophical thought of the nineteenth century—that which deals with the foundations, the validity, and the value of scientific thought and knowledge. Ever since Kant wrote his ‘Critique of Pure Reason’ the questions regarding the principles of science and the nature of mathematical reasoning have formed a very important chapter of philosophy. The subject has been approached from the side of logic, psychology, metaphysics, and science itself; both philosophical and scientific authorities have contributed towards the solution of the problem; perhaps it may be said that it marks one of the few provinces of philosophical thought in which we seem to be approaching a consensus of opinion, to be attaining to a tolerable agreement between philosophical and scientific thinkers. There are few other instances in the large region of philosophical thought where as much as this could be said. These questions centre in the changed view which we take of nature and natural knowledge, the altered meanings which we attach to these words. In the sequel I shall devote a special chapter to this subject.

13.
The escape
has not been
complete.

In the meantime it is sufficient to say that science, scientific knowledge, and scientific theories have not escaped the attacks of the critical spirit.¹ The main

¹ I do not here refer to the never-ending cavillings, on the part of theologians, against the results and teachings of scientific thinkers. I refer to investigations into the principles of scientific reasoning

and the nature of scientific evidence, be it that of the senses or of the logical processes. In modern times these investigations start with Locke, and were continued in his spirit by Mill; more