

human eye could resolve into the movement of particles of matter, as nevertheless constituted in the same fashion as its cosmic and molar arrangements: they were conceived to be motions of particles in space. As these all came under the mechanical theory of forces, so also it seemed a matter of course that what were called molecular phenomena must be regarded in the same manner.

Had the new philosophy of nature contented itself with clearing the way for a fruitful scientific study of natural phenomena, and with combating the vague notions which had been spread through the earlier philosophy of nature, it would have performed a useful task. Unfortunately, however, it did not content itself with this important and well-defined task, but perpetuated the error committed by the earlier school: it attempted to find a universal principle or principles by which external and internal, physical and mental phenomena could be treated alike. This error brought it into discredit with those who were well aware how universal, but at the same time how limited in their application, were the principles of the mechanical sciences, and equally with those who appreciated the stimulating and fructifying influence of the idealistic philosophy. In consequence of this, materialism was early stigmatised as a dilettante thing, and this character it has not been able to shake off up to the present day. It neither understood correctly the nature and scope of the mathematical principles of exact science, nor appreciated the fundamentally different nature of all mental life. In the attempt to bring about a com-