

which comprehend and command the multiplicity of phenomena, recalling but not explaining to us their essential and underlying unity.

As is the case with the notion of force, so also the conception of "Laws of Nature" creates considerable difficulty, and this difficulty arises from similar causes. The word Law is taken from conditions of human society, and denotes written and acknowledged statutes by which the conduct of a number of human beings living together is regulated. In this instance the rule of conduct is superimposed upon the condition of things which would have existed if no definite order had been formed. Such laws are subject to change, can be enforced or disregarded; the law is, as it were, something outside of the society which is supposed to acknowledge and follow it. In a similar manner the popular mind is apt to look upon the laws of nature as something outside of natural things; the latter being considered to be in a state of chaos before the system of laws which constitute the order of nature is introduced. Just in the same way as the forces of nature figured in the popular understanding as something outside or behind the different motions which they bring about, so the laws or order of nature figure in the popular mind as a kind of formal arrangement to which the otherwise disorderly elements have to submit. Now, in the same way as the exact science of nature defines the forces merely by their physical effects in the motions of particles and masses of matter, so it sees and knows the laws of nature only through the actual behaviour of things external. This behaviour exhibits uniformity