

(167.) It is not in crystallized bodies only that this singular effect is produced. Strange as it may seem that a colourless, transparent, and perfectly homogeneous *fluid* should deviate the plane of polarization of a ray passing perpendicularly through it at all; still stranger that it should do so constantly in one direction for the same fluid, but in opposite directions for different fluids; strangest of all, that even vapours should be found possessing the same property: such is the case. Thus, oil of turpentine and its vapour turn the plane of polarization to the right hand, solution of sugar to the left, and so for a variety of other substances.* This property has been made the basis of an elegant instrument called the saccharometer, by which the quantity of sugar contained in a given solution is ascertained by simple inspection of the tint so produced.

(168.) Struck by the fact, apparently so singular, of a "right-and-left-handedness" inherent as it were in the molecules of material bodies—by the correlative fact of such a tendency, or so to speak idiosyncrasy, manifesting itself in the forms of crystals—and again, in quite a different field of scientific research, in the action of an electrified cylindrical wire on a magnetized needle placed parallel to its direction, (which turns the north end of the needle to the right or to the left according to the direction of the current *along* the wire): it early occurred to the writer of these pages that it was

* Mr Jellett, of Trinity College, Dublin, has, I am informed, recently discovered a liquid which is *right-handed* for one end of the spectrum, but *left-handed* for the other!