

and to show how, in spite of the varying aspects which the philosophical problem has presented to us in the foregoing chapters, there has nevertheless gone on a very definite underlying advance in the philosophical Thought of the period. This chapter will accordingly aim at expounding the rationale of philosophical thought. For this purpose I shall have to answer two definite questions. The first will refer to the main influence through which this change and this advance have been brought about; the second will refer to a general tendency of thought which the detailed expositions in the earlier chapters have enabled us to discover in recent philosophical discussions.

I will at once answer the first question by saying that the main influence through which philosophical thought has undergone what we may term a fundamental change must be traced back to the progress of science itself and its manifold applications in practical life: it is, in fact, the working of the scientific spirit, extending beyond the limits of its special subject. This special subject itself we may define as the advancement of natural Knowledge in theory and practice.

3.
Influence
of science.

It may also be convenient, whilst postponing an answer to the second question, to state provisionally that the advance of philosophical thought has been prepared under the influence of the critical spirit through a process which may be divided into two distinct stages. Criticism in philosophy first destroyed the older metaphysical notions by applying, wherever possible, the methods and principles which had proved so efficient in the region of scientific research, and it then turned

4.
And of
criticism.