

influential defenders they have been allowed to remain in the text.

In fact, Comparative Philology has shared the fate of those other sciences which have undergone so marvellous an expansion during the nineteenth century. The high hopes with which their study was first entered upon, have given way to soberer and less ambitious ideas. We have learnt not only that science cannot explain everything, but that, comparatively, it can carry us only a short way. On all sides it is surrounded by impenetrable darkness. Of the causes of the phenomena with which it deals it can tell us nothing. We must be content with such conclusions only as the evidence at our disposal allows us to draw; where the evidence fails or becomes doubtful, science is compelled to be silent. Doubtless as time progresses, the evidence will become clearer and more plentiful, but it will never be complete. All that we can hope to do is to push a little further forward into the region of the unknown.

A book like Professor Brugmann's "Outlines" is an impressive lesson in this respect. The number of words upon which the scientific phonology and etymology of the Indo-European languages have been built, is a mere fragment of the Indo-European vocabulary. It is astonishing how small is the number of words the etymology of which is known with scientific certainty. The same word has to do duty time after time in proof of different phonetic laws, and it is hardly too much to say that the majority of the etymologies given in our dictionaries are merely possible or probable. Like