

student who depends for his information regarding them on books and on scientific journals, has, after all, but a faint impression of the newer phases of scientific enquiry. On attending the meeting of the British Association at Birmingham, after a lapse of ten years, I had forcibly presented to my mind many changes in men and things. Some of the older men had passed away, or were disabled by age and infirmities from active labor. Those who were young and little known had attained to maturity of years and an established reputation. A host of younger men had risen up. In those departments of science in which I am more especially interested, many new discoveries had been made, or new theories broached. The striking and prolific doctrine of the correlation of forces had been worked out. The method of spectrum analysis had been devised, enabling us to attain a knowledge of the chemical composition even of distant heavenly bodies. The hypothesis of the indefinite variation of species had been revived, and had rapidly become popular among the younger scientific men. The later tertiary deposits had yielded evidences of the possible existence of man in the time of the extinct mammoth; while the oldest rocks, before esteemed azoic, had yielded evidences of animal life. In physics, in chemistry, in geology, and in natural history, a multitude of new and important facts, filling great volumes of proceedings and transactions, had been discovered and given to the world; so that every department of science might be said to occupy a new stand-point, and a host of new subjects of discussion had arisen. When we think of the vast range of study and investigation comprised in the proceedings of the British Association for the last ten years, and look back to the dim beginnings of science in a distant antiquity, and forward to the possible solutions of the hundreds of questions still agitated, it becomes a matter of doubt whether we should congratulate ourselves on the vast progress made toward the right understanding of nature, or should sink appalled in the presence of the apparent boundlessness of the unknown. True science is ever disposed to view its position with humility, and to regard the ever widening circle of knowledge as only ever enlarging our conceptions of the amount of what remains to be known, before we shall meet that point, where the possibilities of the finite understanding shall be overtaken, in the presence of an incomprehensible infinity.

The sessions of the British Association are limited to a week—a period generally found too short satisfactorily to dispose of the