

philosophic a grasp of the intricacies of physics, and whose eloquent though sceptical exposition of our laws and processes, and of the modifications entailed in them by recent advances, will be sure to attract still more widespread attention among all to whom the rather abstruse subject-matter is sufficiently familiar. I cannot say that I find myself in agreement with all that Henri Poincaré wrote or spoke in the domain of physics, but no physicist can help being interested in his mode of presentation; and I may have occasion to refer, in passing, to some of the topics with which he dealt.

And now, eliminating from our purview, as is always necessary, a great mass of human activity, and limiting ourselves to a scrutiny on the side of pure science alone, let us ask what, in the main, is the characteristic of the promising though perturbing period in which we live. Different persons would give different answers, but the answer I venture to give is—Rapid progress, combined with Fundamental scepticism.

Rapid progress was not characteristic of the latter half of the nineteenth century,—at least not in physics. Fine solid dynamical foundations were laid, and the edifice of knowledge was con-