

I am very sensible of the fact that in the course of my remarks I have said many things that must have made astronomers present, stare and gasp. Astronomy is beyond all others an exact science, and I have not pretended to exactness. On the contrary there is hardly a statement I have made that does not require qualification. The paths of the planets are *not* in the same plane as that of the earth's orbit. Their orbits are *not* circular. The fixed stars do *not* maintain their relative distance towards each other—on the contrary, they are all in motion. My object, however, was to lay down a few general principles, and not to weary you with refinements. For the purpose of this evening's talk my statements are sufficiently accurate. It does not at all matter to our present purpose that 100,000 years ago the figure of the Great Bear was slightly different from what it will be 100,000 years hence, or that the orbit of Jupiter, instead of lying in the plane of the ecliptic, is inclined  $1^{\circ} 18' 42''$  thereto. When you all become so enamoured of the science as to set up for professional astronomers, you will, no doubt, discard my rough and ready methods, and revel in exactitudes in the most approved style.

Should any of you have been wearied by my attempts to translate into the phraseology of every day life, the language of the stars, I hope you will impute the fault to me, and not to this sublime study—so full of interest and beauty—which has numbered among its votaries so many of the best and brightest of mankind, and which, more than any other, lifts our minds from earth towards heaven.