

guarded and playful paradox of their authors, intended only for the instructed eye—often look bizarre enough.’

One thing is very notable, that it is closer and more exact knowledge that has led to the kind of scientific scepticism now referred to ; and that the simple laws on which we used to be working were thus simple and discoverable because the full complexity of existence was tempered to our ken by the roughness of our means of observation.

Kepler’s laws are not accurately true, and if he had had before him all the data now available he could hardly have discovered them. A planet does not really move in an ellipse but in a kind of hypocycloid, and not accurately in that either.

So it is also with Boyle’s law, and the other simple laws in Physical Chemistry. Even Van der Waals’ generalisation of Boyle’s law is only a further approximation.

In most parts of physics simplicity has sooner or later to give place to complexity : though certainly I urge that the simple laws were true, and are still true, as far as they go, their inaccuracy being only detected by further real discovery. The reason they are departed from becomes known to us ; the law is not really disobeyed, but is modified through the action of a known ad-