

reasonable to ask if they are true or false as to ask if the metric system is true or false. Only, these conventions are convenient.' . . .

'Whether the ether exists or not matters little,—let us leave that to the metaphysicians; what is essential for us is that everything happens as if it existed, and that this hypothesis is found to be suitable for the explanation of phenomena. After all, have we any other reason for believing in the existence of material objects? That, too, is only a convenient hypothesis.'

A needed antidote against over-pressing these utterances, however, is provided by Sir J. Larmor in his Preface :—

'There has been of late a growing trend of opinion, prompted in part by general philosophical views, in the direction that the theoretical constructions of physical science are largely factitious, that instead of presenting a valid image of the relations of things on which further progress can be based, they are still little better than a mirage.' . . .

'The best method of abating this scepticism is to become acquainted with the real scope and modes of application of conceptions which, in the popular language of superficial exposition—and even in the un-