

ELECTRICITY: WHAT IS IT?

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Electricity: What is It? by W. Denham Verschoye

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W. DENHAM VERSCHOYLE

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BY
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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



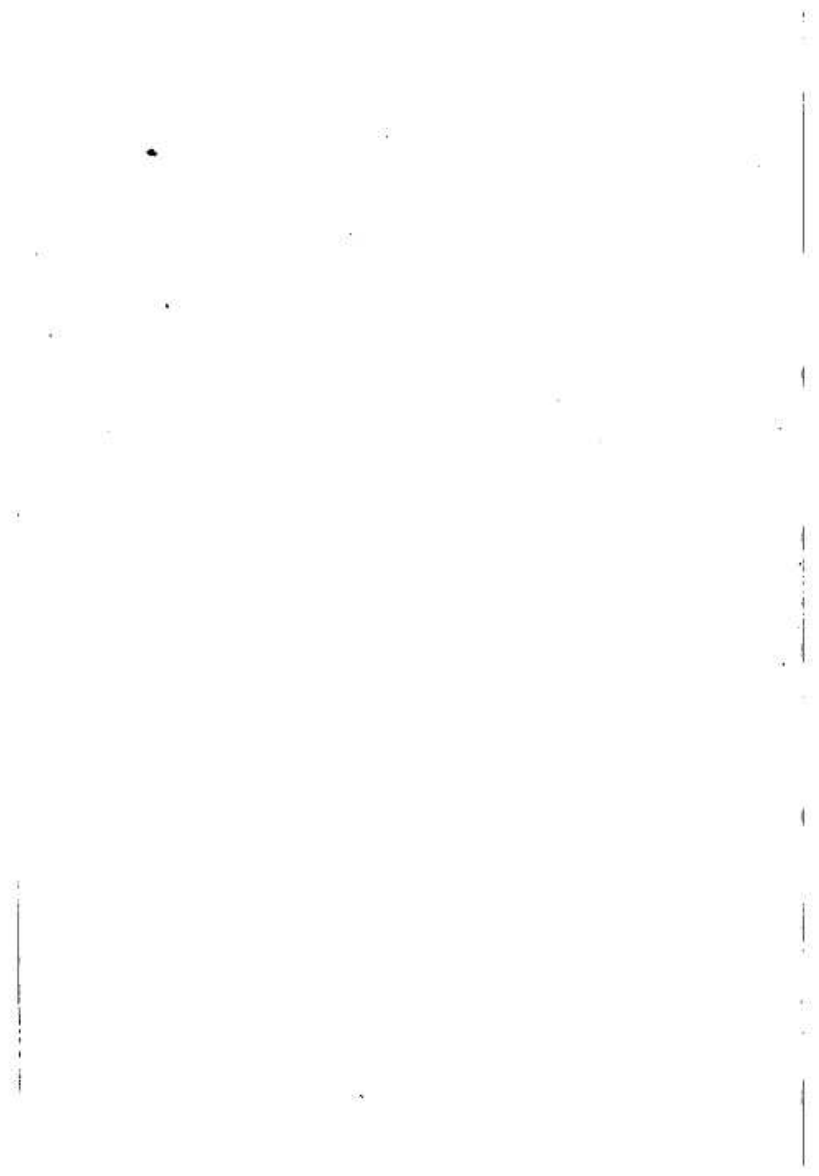
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"Effects may sometimes be produced by influences whose action might be unsuspected when the final result comes to be considered."



PREFACE.

SINCE the earliest dawn of history the mind of man has wrestled with the problem of the Universe. Yet notwithstanding these ages of human effort, scarce can we say that a beginning has been made. If we look with pride on the achievements of our day, we must still remember that they had been impossible but for the work of others. We may have proved those others wrong, but still, the seed was sown that in our time has borne fruit. A line that is written to-day, a thought expressed, may contain the germ of truth, the truth that wise men seek, the truth that may blossom into the glorious realization of to-morrow.

In the pages that follow, there may be a line that contains the germ of truth and they are written because—

“The highest truth a wise man sees he will fearlessly utter, knowing that, let what may come of it, he is thus playing his right part in the world, knowing that if he can effect the

change he aims at—well, if not—well also, though not so well."*

The noble results which Nature has achieved seem to have been attained in all cases by strict adherence to one simple rule, namely, to follow in all cases the line, which of all others, is the simplest. We may then safely accept it as a maxim, that if two or more explanations of any phenomenon present themselves, we are more likely to approach the truth by accepting that explanation which is the simplest and presents the least complications.

If we read the explanations of many of the great Cosmic problems, that were generally accepted, even fifty years ago, and then study the modifications of, or even fundamental divergences from, the old conceptions, which the light of modern research has not alone enabled us to make, but actually compels us to accept; the basic fact that stands out pre-eminently above all others, is, that the general tendency has been towards simplification. Fight that tendency as we may, time and further facts compels us eventually to conform to it.

Our chemists and our physicists keep on discovering new facts and new laws; and the multiplicity and wealth of new discoveries, for which they are responsible, would make it seem a questionable contention that they

* Spencer's First Principles.