CONTINUITY.

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"WHEAT 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. Of the progress I shall say little; there must always be some uncertainty as to which particular achievement permanently contributes to it; but I will speak about the fundamental scepticism. Let me hasten to explain that I do not mean the well-worn and almost antique theme of Theological Scepticism: that controversy is practically in abeyance just now. At any rate, the major conflict is suspended; the forts behind which the enemy has retreated do not invite attack, the territory now occupied by him is little more than his legitimate province. It is the scientific allies, now, who are waging a more or less invigorating conflict among themselves; with philosophers joining in. Meanwhile the ancient foe is biding his time, and hoping that from the struggle something will emerge of benefit to himself. Some positions, he feels, were too hastily abandoned, and may perhaps be retrieved; or, to put it without metaphor, it seems possible that a few of the things prematurely denied, because asserted on inconclusive evidence, may, after all, in some form or other, have really happened. Thus the old theological bitterness is mitigated, and a tempering policy is either advocated or instinctively adopted."

In illustration of the fundamental scientific or philosophic controversies of which he spoke Sir Oliver Lodge pointed to the conflict in physiology ranging round Vitalism, the debate concerning atomic structure in chemistry, and the dispute on the laws of inheritance in biology. Beside these major controversies, debate is active on questions of education, political and economic science, and in the mathematical and physical sciences. In the last-named present-day scepticism concerns what, in one word, Sir Oliver Lodge called Continuity. Still more fundamental than any of these sectional debates, however, is the critical examination of scientific foundations going on; and a kind of philosophical scepticism is in the ascendant, resulting in a mis-

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