

25.
Spirit of exact research
and *Wissenschaft*.

But it is my object at present not so much to dwell upon specific ideas or doctrines as on the growth, the diffusion, and the general character of scientific thought, as this has been established by the separate contributions of the three nations in the course of the first half of our century. I therefore cannot leave the subject of German science without still more precisely noting the peculiar character which scientific thought has assumed under the influence of the German university system. As we saw before, when the spirit of exact research, mainly through the influence of the great French mathematicians and physicists, became diffused in Germany, and entered the pale of the German universities, it was met there by that peculiar ideal of learning which the German language terms *Wissenschaft*. This encounter did not everywhere produce a favourable reception for the new school; but in the end it led, like every controversy, to a firmer establishment of the true principles of research. The life of the German universities had in the earlier centuries begun with classical studies; it had been reformed under the influence of the theological and juridical requirements of the Protestant Governments; and ultimately it had been entirely renewed under the influence of the classical and philosophical studies centred in the fourth or philosophical faculty. These classical and philosophical studies combined to create the ideal of *Wissenschaft*, or science, in the broadest sense of the word. This ideal formed the central conception in the new scheme of a higher and general education of the nation; it accompanied the great revival in art, poetry, and literature. In the