

discussions may lead to matters of detail and confine themselves frequently to restricted problems, they would cease to be philosophical in the true sense of the word if they should rest content with such restricted and detailed discussions and not take note of their bearing on the great task of the unification of knowledge and thought.

2.  
Aim at  
unification.

In that portion of this history which traced the

the philosophical on the other. "If we regard objects of nature, but especially those which are living, with the intention of gaining an insight into the connection of their being and acting, we believe that the best way to arrive at this is through separation of their parts; as indeed this way really leads us a good space onward. We need only recall to the memory of all friends of knowledge what chemistry and anatomy have contributed to an insight and comprehension of nature. But these dividing operations, ever and ever continued, produce likewise many a disadvantage; the living is indeed analysed into elements, but it cannot possibly be brought together again out of them and animated. This is even true of many inorganic and not only of organic bodies. Accordingly we find among scientific persons at all times the desire manifesting itself, to recognise living things as such, to regard their external, visible, and tangible parts in their connection, to view them as indications of the internal, and thus to command, as it were, a view of the whole. How intimately this desire is connected with the artistic and imitative tendency need not be elaborately pointed out" ('Zur Morphologie,' Jena, 1807, Werke, Weimar edition. II. Abth., vol. vi. p. 8). In the latter sense Goethe has referred to the same idea in many passages of

his morphological writings. The second prominent thinker who seems to have been impressed with this view is Auguste Comte, who had moreover the merit of coining a term which denotes the difference of the two aspects. Already in an early tract of the year 1825 ('*Considérations sur les Sciences et les Savants*'), he employs the term *esprit d'ensemble*, which he considers has been lost and can only be restored again by the positive philosophy. It is true that in his first great work he urges this aspect mainly when discussing the method of the biological sciences as compared with those sciences which deal with inorganic nature or with abstract mechanics. The translators of Comte's tract, which was reprinted by him at the end of the 4th volume of his second large work, in the year 1854, do not seem to have been able to find an English equivalent for this term. The best rendering of it seems to be that proposed by my friend, Prof. W. R. Sorley, viz., the synoptical view. The *ensemble* of things denotes their actual "Together" in nature, and is very different from that unification aimed at by Herbert Spencer and successfully carried out in what we may, in a restricted sense, call the scientific study of nature (see Eng. trans. of the '*System of Positive Polity*, Paris, 1854,' vol. iv. p. 607).