

to impress upon the minds of their hearers and readers the existence of a higher, more unified, and more spiritual knowledge than that which the separate sciences afforded. With the conviction that such a higher field of mental activity really exists, and is within the reach of the human intellect, they started on their way. We must remember that they were neither surrounded by growing material prosperity and industrial enterprise, to which contemporary thinkers in this country might direct their attention, nor had they grown up in the midst of the great achievements which the exact scientific spirit could boast of in France at the end of the eighteenth century. Industrial progress and economic wealth were just as much wanting in Germany at that time as was the correct appreciation of the exact methods of research, notably of applied mathematics. The only thinkers of importance who were acquainted with what we nowadays look upon as exact knowledge were Fries and, somewhat later, Herbart. Both these thinkers stood, however, too much outside of the interests and aspirations which then guided German literature and German thought to earn speedily from their contemporaries the recognition which they deserved. No better example exists of the defects as well as the peculiar kind of inspiration which characterises the more impressive deliverances of the idealistic school, than the introduction to the series of lectures which Schelling delivered at Jena in 1802 "On the method of academic study." Without leading up to the elevated position which he desires to occupy, he at once propounds the idea of an unconditional and unified knowledge, and he bases this on the conviction that the