

from it. Illustrious examples of this kind are to be found, *e.g.*, in J. von Liebig, Johannes Müller, E. von Baer,¹ G. T. Fechner,² who nevertheless in their further development retained a large share of the idealistic spirit. Fortunately, however, for the idealistic school, it could count on the support of two movements which were then much more prominent in Germany than the culture of the exact sciences, whose only great popular exponent and later patron, A. von Humboldt, was then travelling in the tropical regions of the New World.³ These two

¹ See vol. i. of this History *passim*, especially pp. 207, 208.

² The influence of Schelling upon Fechner is important and probably typical. It is described by Fechner himself in a characteristic passage quoted by J. E. Kuntze ('G. T. Fechner,' 1892). "Through my medical studies I had become a complete atheist, alienated from religious ideas; I saw in the world only a mechanical scheme. At that time I came across Oken's 'Naturphilosophie,' which I began to read with a friend. A new light seemed to me all at once to illuminate the whole world and the science of the world. I was as if dazzled by it. In truth I did not really understand anything properly—how could that have been possible?—and I did not advance beyond the first chapters; but, in effect, I had at once gained the position for a grand united view of the world, began to study Schelling, Steffens, and other philosophers of nature, failed indeed to find in any of them clearness, but thought I could myself do something in that direction, of which some Essays in 'Stapelia Mixta' (1824) bear testimony. But even now I remember that I once put to myself the question: Could anything, by the ways of Oken-

Schelling, have been found of the beautiful and orderly connection of optical phenomena which Biot lays before us with such clearness? Certainly natural science does not lie in these ways. . . . The influence of that period in the direction of a uniting activity and a spiritual penetration of nature has remained for me and has found expression in later writings, although I could then no longer consider the view of Schelling-Oken to be adequate" (pp. 39, 40).

³ There lived in Germany at that time, at the University of Göttingen, another prominent representative of the genuine scientific spirit, the great mathematician, C. F. Gauss. Although, however, he had already published in 1801 his most original work, 'Disquisitiones Arithmeticae' (see vol. i. of this History, p. 120), he was practically unknown to German scholars and thinkers. Not a great teacher, he belonged to the small international society of foremost mathematicians and astronomers of the age, for many of whom his labours furnished the starting-point of entirely new developments. His 'Theoria motus corporum caelestium' was published in 1809 (see *ibid.*, p. 324).