

definitions.¹ And, on the other side, even those who at the time most loudly declaimed against the doctrines of Schelling were rarely free from philosophical generalisations or traditional prejudices which proved to be equally misleading.

About the time when Schelling published his 'Philosophy of Nature,' which professed to be an ideal interpretation of nature, Laplace in France published two works in which he made two important contributions to a mechanical philosophy of Nature. At the end of his 'Exposition du Système du Monde' he propounded what is now termed the nebular hypothesis, and in the introduction to his 'Essai Philosophique sur les Probabilités' he put forward in a similarly compre-

s.
Laplace.

¹ The most prominent thinker in the middle of the nineteenth century who adopted suggestions contained in the writings of the earlier school, and who forms, as it were, a connecting link between the ideal and the mechanical view of nature, was Fechner. Prof. Wundt, in an appendix to his Centenary Address in memory of Fechner (1901, p. 63), has collected valuable references showing how various suggestions, put forward by writers belonging to the school of Schelling, have survived and been elaborated by Fechner. Such anticipations of Fechner's views are notably to be found in the 'Naturphilosophie' (1809-11) of Oken, who, as Fechner himself says, "Through his titanic audacity raised me for the first time above the ordinary view of nature and forced me for some time into his own channels of thought." And Prof. Wundt goes on to show how: "In Oken a real familiarity with the facts of the natural sciences gave to his fanciful speculations a

direction through which he occasionally anticipates, though indeed in a crude form, more recent conceptions. This is notably the case in his evolutionary digressions. . . . If in recent times Schelling has been occasionally extolled as a forerunner of the theory of evolution, this is a complete mistake. Schelling never understood the idea of development otherwise than in that ideal sense in which Goethe, whose 'Metamorphose der Pflanzen' mainly influenced Schelling, considered the flower to be a higher stage of the leaf. . . . Oken is, so far as I can find, the only one among these philosophers who clearly looked upon organic development as a real process and applied this conception also to the human race. He was, therefore, in this sense a true forerunner of the theory of descent, while his 'infusorial bubbles' and his 'primæval ooze' anticipate certain conceptions of the cellular and protoplasmic theories" (p. 65).