

which they became fruitful in a direction not anticipated by their author himself. Had Schelling and his followers confined their view to the purely natural, as distinguished from the abstract physical, sciences, their writings would have done less harm and led to less opposition. Unfortunately, however, they applied it in two directions where it proved to be either useless or actually harmful. The first of these was marked by the attempt to find a formula which would not only explain the organic living creation, but also, by analogy, the phenomena of the inorganic world. The second became manifest in the sway which the ideas of Schelling exercised over the medical sciences.

Now, the whole tendency of the new or French school of natural, as distinguished from mental, science in that age was in the direction not of a genetic or dynamic, but of a statical or morphological conception of phenomena. This showed itself in the confidence with which certain arithmetical or geometrical relations—such as the laws of attraction and of fixed proportions, the types of crystalline and organic forms—were applied to the mechanical explanation or classification of cosmic, molar, and molecular phenomena, of lifeless and living things. And this view was confirmed by the many discoveries and explorations through which the aspect of nature and of things natural became vastly widened and deepened.

This was the age which inspired one of the most prominent students of nature, A. von Humboldt, with the idea of writing a physical description of the Cosmos, a scheme which was not carried out till much later, when

13.
Statical
view of
French
science.

14.
Insuffici-
ency of this.