

SCIENCE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1913

SOME RELATIONS BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY IN GERMANY¹

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I PRESENT this paper in response to Dr. Councilman's request; and its choice of topics is determined wholly by the instructions that he has given me in asking me to prepare to meet you. It is not for me to judge in what way these hastily prepared notes can be of service to any of you; and as a fact, I confess myself unable to see that they can be of any service whatever to a company of pathologists. I am, of course, profoundly ignorant of pathology. And, as I learn from consulting the sources, the school of scientific men of whom Virchow was the leader felt, at the outset of their great undertaking, in the years before 1850, that philosophy, and, in particular, that what used to be called, in Germany, the *Naturphilosophie*, had formerly been, in the main, profoundly harmful in its influence upon medicine in general, and upon the beginnings of modern pathology in particular, so that one great initial purpose of Virchow and of his allies, during the years before 1848, was to free their young science from whatever was still left of these evil philosophical influences and to make it a true natural science. I not only learn that this was their opinion; but I see, as any student of the history of thought in the nineteenth century must see, that this opinion was in a large measure very well justified. Philosophy, in the first quarter of the nine-

¹ Read at a session of the Pathological Club, of the Harvard Medical School, at the request of Professor W. T. Councilman, President of the Club.