

57.  
Avenarius.

In dealing with modern empirical psychology, I have confined myself mainly to the work of English thinkers, and notably to the expositions of James Ward. A movement in many ways similar has taken place among German psychologists; though perhaps nowhere in their voluminous writings has the matter been so simply and lucidly dealt with as in the expositions given in English philosophical literature. In Germany the philosophy of Richard Avenarius<sup>1</sup> aims apparently at a similar reduction

is essentially genetic in its method, and might, if we had the power to revise our existing terminology, be called biology; the latter, on the other hand, is essentially devoid of everything historical, and treats *sub specie æternitatis*, as Spinoza might have said, of human knowledge, conceived as the possession of 'mind' in general. The principles of psychology are part of the material, the logical worth and position of which a theory of knowledge has to assign; but they are not, neither do they furnish, the critical canons by which knowledge is to be tested. Yet, in three several ways, epistemology has been supposed to depend upon psychology, in so far, viz., as psychology might explain the origin of knowledge, the process of knowing, or the limits of the knowable. But it can answer none of these questions in the way required. To ask them at all betrays serious misconception as to the nature of psychology. . . . So far, knowledge has contained the means of its own advance, and mere psychology cannot tell us whether this is to hold always or must cease at some point, while there remain possibilities of knowledge still beyond. Psychology seems, in fact, far more intimately related to metaphysics, that is to say, to theories about being and

becoming, than to theories of knowledge" (J. Ward, "Psychological Principles,"—'Mind,' 1883, p. 167).

<sup>1</sup> Born 1843, Avenarius died 1896, as Professor of Philosophy, at Zürich. His philosophy, which certainly possesses the merit of originality both in form and substance, was elaborated under the influence of the different lines of thought which prevail in modern scientific and philosophical literature. Thus we find such heterogeneous aspects as the physiological (through Ludwig), the purely physical and descriptive (through Kirchhoff and Mach), the Herbartian (through Drobisch), and, above all, the pantheistic or parallelistic of Spinoza, brought together. The modern conception of science and philosophy as a unification of knowledge or thought takes with him the form of "economy of thought," as, in consequence of the limited nature of the human intellect, a condensation and simplification of ideas is inevitably called for. It seems, therefore, as if his object was to reduce the complex mass of our intellectual conceptions to a minimum of what he terms "pure" experience; the latter is, therefore, not, as in Kant's conception of pure reason, the fundamental endowment of the human mind; it is rather the ultimate outcome of a purifying process of