

Avenarius, who published in 1876 a tract with the significant title "Philosophy as thinking of the world according to the principle of least action." On the other side Prof. Pearson comes in contact with Herbert Spencer in his attempt to conceive our fundamental notions as unconsciously elaborated and perfected through inheritance. This is supposed to work through adaptation; strengthening and firmly establishing in the human mind and in the course of many generations fundamental notions and axioms which are best fitted to symbolise and describe the experience gained through the senses. These are further elaborated by science into a convenient and practical system of abstract reasoning on things natural.

This idea of adaptation and inheritance explains how certain fundamental notions and axioms appear to be *a priori* (in the sense of Kant) for the individual human mind, although they are *a posteriori*—*i.e.*, empirically acquired, so far as the civilised human race is concerned; and it further explains how it comes about that the human mind is nowadays in possession of a framework of ideas with which it can construct a correct and useful, though merely symbolical, image or model of the facts and processes of nature. Another school, who do not necessarily accept the Spencerian or Darwinian theory of evolution and adaptation, are forced to consider this adaptation of human ideas to real phenomena as a matter of happy chance or good luck which might equally well not have existed at all.¹

¹ Dr Kleinpeter has summarised the theories of Mach, Stallo, Clifford, Kirchhoff, Hertz, Pearson, and Ostwald in an interesting treatise, 'Die Erkenntnistheorie der Naturforschung der Gegen-