

materialists, perhaps with more correctness than was the case with Lotze and Virchow, the principal protagonists in that celebrated battle with antiquated notions. It was therefore with all the more authority that he undertook, in the year 1872, to address the meeting of German naturalists at Leipsic "On the Limits of Natural Knowledge." The address created an enormous sensation, led to a great controversy and to many further explanations by adherents as well as opponents, was republished many times, and was latterly followed by an equally celebrated oration before the Berlin Academy (1880) entitled "The Seven World Riddles."¹ These two deliverances contain a characteristic definition of the ultimate bearing of recent scientific ideas upon the great philosophical problems. And, inasmuch as they emanated from a foremost representative of modern scientific reasoning, and out of the centre of that eminent scientific circle which counted among its members Helmholtz, Kirchhoff, and Virchow, and perpetuated the traditions of Johannes Müller, it deservedly commands, up to

¹ This is the first and most concise specimen in modern literature of those attempts to revive, solve, or declare insoluble the ancient riddle of the Sphinx. On this Kuno Fischer has a fine ironical remark in the concluding paragraph of his monumental 'History of Modern Philosophy': "The meaning of the world is not a riddle as our modern *Welträthsler* are fond of saying, in order either to play or to vanquish the Sphinx, but a problem which man puts to himself, for he will and must know the essence of his own being. The

progressive solution of this problem, which can only take place in the course of the ages of the world, is the history of philosophy, for the ages of humanity belong to the theme of the problem, as in olden times the four-footed, two-footed, and three-footed ages of man belonged to the theme of the Sphinx. In this connection with the ages of mankind, in this light of a progressive solution of the world-problem, Hegel was the first to regard the history of philosophy" (vol. viii., p. 1190).