

be an unrealisable ideal in that it dealt with inner phenomena as unconnected with outer ones: a psycho-physical mechanism was a nearer approach to a true description of reality, and could not be narrowed down to a purely physical occurrence; moreover, the unity of mental life was a special property which had to be recognised and defined.

28.
The psycho-
physics of
vision.

Lotze himself, after formulating the conception of a psycho-physical mechanism, and utilising the elaborate and fundamental experiments and observations of Weber as illustrations of what was meant, made an important contribution towards an analysis of a compound physico-psychical process. He took up the problem which Berkeley had attacked, of the formation of our space perception. It had been introduced into German psychology mainly through Herbart with reference to the Kantian doctrine that space is a subjective form. Through Lotze, and subsequently through Helmholtz, it has been shown to have not only a psychological but likewise a physiological importance: it is a problem of psycho-physics.

There exists a peculiar difficulty in bringing home to the popular mind the fact that a special problem is in-

may be noted. First, it is clear that Lotze was an "organicist" before Claude Bernard and other more recent thinkers mentioned above. Secondly, it is very evident that Lotze belongs to the pre-Darwinian school of thought. In fact, he does not relish the genetic aspect. The historical beginnings of ideas are for him no indication of their value and correctness. He says on this point: "The genesis of a conception is no argument for its

validity; in the ever indistinct manner in which language operates in forming its words, it may form the correctest conceptions in just as incorrect a manner as the most erroneous ones. What is important is whether the conception, formed anyhow, can justify itself" ('Med. Psychol.,' p. 41). I shall on another occasion have to refer more fully to this marked absence of the historical sense in Lotze.