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by Aristotle to signify "that which is assumed as a basis of demonstration;" for "assumption" in short, or "postulate;" the root idea being that of worthiness, something worthy of acceptance without disputation. Nor is Euclid responsible for the word since he didn't use it, and is thus doubly free from the charge of calling his principle about parallel lines "self-evident."

The question arose in a controversy between Herbert Spencer and Frof. Tait The latter in his Thermolynamics asserts that Natural Philosophy is an experimental and not an intuitive science. "No à priori reasoning can conduct us demonstratively to a single physical truth.

"I hold, on the contrary," says Spencer "that as there are à priori mathematical truths the consciousness of which results, "not from our "individual experiences, but from the organized and inherited effects of "ancestral experiences, received throughout an immeasurable past; so "thore are à priori physical truths, our consciousness of which has a like "origin. I have endeavoured to show that Prof. Tait himself by say-"ing of physical axioms that the appropriately eultivated intelligence "sees at once their necessary truth, tacitly elasses them with mathema-"tical axioms of which this self-evidence is also the recognized character " Further I have contended that the Laws of Motion are à priori truths " of this kind; are enunciated by Newton as such "-Spencer then goes on to quote Tait's reason for asserting that the Laws of Motion are not to be accepted as valid à priori. "The reason is that as the properties or " matter might have been such as to render a totally different set of laws " exiomatic, these laws must be considered as resting on observation and " experiment, and not on intuitive perception." This is also the opinion of Newton as expressed in his letters. If Herbert Spencer had ever leetnred to a class of students on the Second Law of Motion he might have been tempted to explain their want of intuitive perception of its a priori truth by a limitation of the "immeasurable past" in their "ancestral experiences," and put the origin of man as recent.

The position of Spencer in the disputation was like that of an army which while fighting the enemy in front is unexpectedly assailed in the flank by a force ealled in as an auxiliary. But Spencer did not quail. He faced the new foe with undaunted conrage, supported probably by the conviction that while his adversary seemed to be on his own territory of Physics, he was on the very verge, if he had not actually erossel the houndary line of Metaphysics, a department which borders on all the Physical and Natural sciences, and appears to have to some students in these departments the fascinating advantage for polemic purposes of a general absence of axioms (i.e. of propositions universally admitted) Hence combatants with differing opinions can each choose his own