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PERCEPTION AND PHYSICAL REALITY.

THE recent appearance of vigorous criticisms of epistemological 'idealism,' and of equally vigorous affirmations of 'realism' regarded as the antithesis of this form of idealism, may be taken as evidence that the fundamental epistemological problem of the relation of cognizing mind to physical reality is still a battle ground of philosophical discussion. I propose, therefore, in the present article to reëxamine this problem from the standpoint of perception, since I conceive that it is in perception that the crux of the problem is to be found. In this undertaking I shall eschew as much as possible the use of those very misleading and confusing terms 'idealism' and 'realism.' It may conduce to clearness, however, to say, at the outset, that epistemologically my theory is realistic, and it involves a metaphysical view which may be called 'organic experientialism.' Perhaps the closest point of contact of the present paper with recent discussions is with the very striking paper read by Professor A. E. Taylor at the Ithaca meeting of the American Philosophical Association, December, 1907, and briefly reported in the proceedings of the association in the *PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW*, Vol. XVII, pp. 173-5. I regret that this paper has not yet been published in full. As I remember it, Professor Taylor argued that perceptions are the realities of the external world. It will be one chief aim of the present article to establish this view, and another to draw out its implications. For the sake of simplicity and directness I shall ignore the distinct problem as to how we know other finite minds, except in so far as the discussion of this problem is connected with our main issue, — the relation of perception as cognitive act to physical reality. This issue is best handled, I believe, by a direct analysis of experience.