

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

NATURALISM AND IDEALISM.

MORE than three years have now passed since Professor James Ward delivered at Aberdeen a course of Gifford Lectures, subsequently published under the title *Naturalism and Agnosticism*. The following notes, criticising some of the views therein expressed, were written during a prolonged stay abroad, where an acquaintance was impossible with the replies which these lectures were at the time provoking. As, however, on my return I find that I have approached the subject from a standpoint somewhat different from that adopted by others, I have thought fit to offer them in the present paper.

The main object of Professor Ward's lectures is never for one moment disguised. Yet—perhaps inevitably in a work of such scope—there appear statements and arguments which are with difficulty reconcilable. For instance, we read repeatedly that the mechanical theory of the universe is “approximate,” “incompetent” and “absurdly inadequate,” “landing us in a nihilism”; yet elsewhere we are told that “the course of nature *can* be summarized by mechanical formulæ” (II, p. 274), and that “whatever be its meaning, its purpose, or its life, the cosmos in one aspect is but matter in motion” (I, p. 247). Or again, while in one place the lecturer asserts that “science . . . has been driven to a species of hybrid monism” (II, p. 202), yet in another he willingly accepts the view that science “contents itself only with descriptions.”

Moreover, the work contains suggestions towards a revision of current scientific theories, which, although not essential to estab-