

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

EXPERIENCE AND OBJECTIVE IDEALISM.

IDEALISM as a philosophic system stands in such a delicate relation to experience as to invite attention. In its subjective form, or sensationalism, it claims to be the last word of empiricism. In its objective, or rational form, it claims to make good the deficiencies of the subjective type, by emphasizing the work of thought which supplies the factors of objectivity and universality lacking in sensationalism. With reference to experience *as it now is*, such idealism is half opposed to empiricism and half committed to it, — antagonistic, so far as existing experience is regarded as tainted with a sensational character ; favorable, so far as thought renders this experience even now prophetic of some final, all-comprehensive, or absolute experience, which in truth is one with reality.

That this combination of opposition to present experience and devotion to the cause of experience in the abstract leaves objective idealism in a position of unstable equilibrium from which it can find release only by euthanasia in a thorough-going empiricism seems to me evident. Some of the reasons for this belief may be readily approached by a summary sketch of three historic episodes in which have emerged important conceptions of experience and of reason. The first takes us to classic Greek thought. Here experience means the preservation, through memory, of the net result of a multiplicity of particular doings and sufferings ; and in such a way as to afford positive skill in maintaining further practice, and promise of success in new emergencies. The craft of the carpenter, the art of the physician are standing examples of its meaning. It differs from instinct