

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

NATURE, REASON AND THE LIMITS OF STATE AUTHORITY.¹

THAT ideas are more effective and important agencies in human affairs than events however massive—that the Justice of Plato, and the Law of Nature and of Reason of the Stoics, will continue to influence men's thoughts and actions long after all Pragmatic Sanctions and Golden Bulls are dusty and forgotten—this is a conclusion willingly embraced by most philosophers, and by some historians. The reading public at large pays little heed to it, and expects to learn 'what really happens' from the daily paper. But the part of one nation in the present war has been so obviously deliberate and intentional, the organized use of all its powers so plainly part of a plan from the beginning, that for once we are all agreed that there is a theory back of it, and that in this case at least national character has more in it than habit and feeling.

What is this theory? And is it one peculiar to Germany, or one which has affected the development and policies of all modern states, so that, sharing it more or less, they also share more or less the responsibility for its bad effects, if it has any? Since August, 1914, all sorts of answers have been proposed for these questions, especially the first. They have included insipid republications of Chamberlain's "Aryan" propaganda, the theme of which goes back to certain lucubrations of Fichte and of Schopenhauer, and is a signal example of the illegitimate alliance of science and romance; the mistaken interpretation of Nietzsche's

¹ Read in part before the Western Philosophical Association, April, 1916.