

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

THE FORM OF PHILOSOPHICAL OBJECTIVITY.

IN a paper published last year in the *Journal of Philosophy*¹ I endeavored to set forth the form of objectivity at which philosophy ultimately seeks to arrive, and to distinguish this sharply from the type of explanation that the special sciences take as their ideal. The conclusion maintained was that philosophy seeks insight into the nature of individual wholes, into the significant natures of the real things that concrete experience presents to us. While the sciences furnish an explanation of experience by discovering through analysis uniform correlations between certain aspects of reality that are regarded as typical or general, the demands of philosophy are satisfied only when insight has been gained into the nature of individuals and their relations and the whole has been concretely grasped by thought. Philosophy, then, as thus defined is not primarily interested in the abstract but in the concrete: it is not the science of the possible and its conditions, or of the general or typical as such; but its effort is to understand the world of actual experience and the real individuals that compose it in their full concreteness. To attain this concreteness, however, philosophy, like all thought, has to pass through the abstract way—to begin with processes of analysis and definition. It is accordingly not absolved from the necessity of employing exact and precise methods in dealing with its data. But it is necessary to keep in mind that this abstract procedure and the results obtained by it are never more than means to the

¹ "The Form of Philosophical Intelligibility," *J. of Philos.*, Vol. XIX, No. 10, May 11, 1922.