

THE  
PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

---

THE IDEALISM OF EDWARD CAIRD: II.

IN the last number of the PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW an attempt was made to give some account of the mental development of Edward Caird, and to indicate the conclusion to which he was brought by a study of the great masterpieces of ancient, medieval, and modern literature and philosophy. The training to which he was subjected in Oxford, as well as the natural bent of his own disposition, which was modest in a large and impersonal way, together with his antipathy to all dogmatic utterances, led him to seek for truth by an assimilation of the highest products of all time, and by the construction of a system of thought that should reconcile the partial truth of opposite schools in something approaching to the calm and unimpassioned voice of reason. Those who take a less sympathetic view of his writings will naturally attribute this indirect method of presentation to the absence of the highest kind of speculative originality; and indeed he would have been himself the first to protest against his being ranked as more than a humble, though not a slavish, follower of the great masters of speculation; but it may be permitted to those who have found in his writings the insight and inspiration of a sane, well-balanced, and comprehensive mind to give him a foremost place among those thinkers of the nineteenth century whose power is best attested by their wide and far-reaching influence. However this may be, the manner in which Caird preferred to set forth his ideas was through the exposition and criticism of Plato and Aristotle, Plotinus and Augustine, Descartes and Spinoza, Kant and Hegel; and this makes it difficult, for one who would sum up his ideas with something of his own clearness and vigor, to present his philosophy in a short and concise form.