

## THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

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### THE OBJECTS OF KNOWLEDGE.

THE distinction between 'object' as a thing existentially external to an individual mind and 'object' as the goal or term of reference for thought, is obviously of the utmost importance for epistemological discussion; and yet this distinction is one not always kept in mind in such discussions. It is with 'objects' in the second sense that we are concerned in this article. An object in this general sense, which includes, as a special class, objects in the first sense, is anything that may be qualified by the judgmental reference of thought to it. Object, in this fundamental, epistemological meaning of the term, includes all termini of judgment, whether the aim be simply to render a theoretical account of fact or to treat such account as a step towards practical achievement. Since conscious possession of knowledge requires always the activity of judgment, no sharp line of division can be drawn between theoretical and practical thinking. The success of practice involves the truth of theory.

An object, then, is any specific situation or element in experience which yields *conscious meaning* or reflective significance for a thinking self. And 'object,' as the terminus or 'objective' of judgment in cognition, is analogous to 'object' in the practical sense, as goal of volition or action. In this respect, no hard and fast line can be drawn between thinking and willing, cognition and action. When one asks me, "What is the *object* of all this labor of yours?" he means, and I understand that he means, "What *end* have you in view in carrying on this piece of literary work, *i. e.*, what is the goal of your effort of will, involving, as it does, so much reflection?" Another may be asked, "What is