

AN OUTLINE
OF THE
IDEALISTIC CONSTRUCTION
OF EXPERIENCE



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BY

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PREFACE

AN idealistic theory of experience generally presents a somewhat perplexing appearance. It seems either to go too far, and to make experience intelligible by merely resolving it into ideal elements; or not far enough, and to leave experience, of which it professes to give the principle, outside the explanation altogether. The "explanation" in the first case is little better than a truism: it means that experience is intelligible if it is resolved into ideal, *i.e.* into intelligible elements. In the second case the "explanation" is a paradox, since we are unable to read our experience by the light of the "explanation." Both start from the duality of subject and object, which is certainly essential to experience. But the first destroys the distinction in the process of showing the unity between the two; the second destroys the unity of experience in the attempt to do justice to the distinction on which it rests. The result is that neither common sense nor the ordinary scientific mind is convinced by idealism. The idealistic argument may seem unassailable, and its ingenuity