

## Book Reviews.

*The Philosophy of Kant Explained.* By John Watson, M.A., LL.D., Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Queen's College, Kingston Canada, author of "An Outline on Philosophy," "Hedonistic Theories," etc. Glasgow: Jas. Maclehose and Sons, 1908.

THE art of giving form to the nebulous and clarity of the obscure, that is the art that is pre-eminently Professor Watson's own, and one which has been given splendid scope in this, his latest work. In his prefatory notes he says,— "his book is the result of a not unsuccessful experiment in the art of teaching continued over many years, the main object of which was to provide a method by which the tendency of the student to lean upon the authority of his teacher should be counteracted. Nothing can well be more fatal to any real progress in philosophy than the habit of listening to lectures without a corresponding reaction of one's own mind. Various plans have been suggested for the avoidance of this fatal defect. The plan that I was led to adopt with more advanced students a good many years ago was to introduce them to the direct study of the Critical Philosophy through the medium of the translated passages, published under the title of "The Philosophy of Kant in Extracts from his own Writings," which I had made expressly for that purpose. In this way I was able to count on the co-operation of the class, while the method seemed to me to have the additional advantage of recognizing that the mind can only be roused to powerful reaction when the matter upon which it is exercised is of the first rank. The main disadvantage of this method of slow and elaborate study is the amount of time it consumes, and I have therefore thought it advisable to publish the oral explanations that I have been led to give on the successive paragraphs of my translations from Kant. As these explanations were actually given in class, with direct reference to the difficulties found in the text of my translations, it may be hoped that they will be found instructive to others as well."

The introductory chapter of thirty pages gives a "Historical Retrospect," a critical summary of the development of physical thought from the time of the Renaissance and the Reformation down to Kant. The writer arranges the problems of Philosophy under the three heads: (1) What is the nature of the object? (2) What is the nature of the subject? (3) What is the nature of the Unity which comprehends both object and subject? He shows how the solution of the problems have been developed along two divergent lines, from Descartes through Spinoza, Leibnitz and Wolff, and from Locke through Berkeley and Hume. Kant found himself face to face with these two great movements, and his philosophy is the attempt to get beyond both.

This is the only part of the book in which the critical method of treatment is employed, the remainder, the bulk of the book, being "purposely limited" to pure exposition of the four great divisions of Kant's work, the Critique of Pure Reason, the Metaphysic of Morality, the Critique of Practical Reason, and the Critique of Judgment. Most readers of the book will admire the consistency with which