

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

PHILOSOPHY IN FRANCE IN 1911.¹

I.

IN the year 1911 occurred the meeting of the International Congress of Philosophy, which is held every four years, and which this year took place at Bologna. French philosophy, represented by such men as Boutroux, Bergson, Durkheim (to mention only the most noted), occupied a prominent place. The active spirit of French philosophy, the profoundly studied character of its great doctrines, its constant preoccupation with the ideal as founded upon an absolute respect for positive knowledge and for facts, were all plainly evident at this Congress.

The problem which occupied the first rank was that of the nature, method, and function of philosophy.² In the first place, M. Boutroux, with his great authority, formulated the problem in the form of a consideration of the relation of the sciences to philosophy. After having rejected the old solution which confused them, the over-simple solution which presumes to be able to do away with philosophy, and the positivist solution which attempts a synthesis of the sciences conceived according to the scientific type, he has shown the original and irreducible rôle of our studies; above the sciences there is the *raison d'être* of science, in a word, Reason, whose function it is to reflect upon the sciences and upon life. However it may appear at first, there are not in the philosophy of knowledge and the philosophy

¹ Translated from the French by Dr. E. Jordan.

² The French communications to the Congress at Bologna have been published in the *Revue de Métaphysique* for July, 1911, except that of M. Bergson, which appeared in the November number of the same review, and those of M. M. Poincaré and Langevin, which appeared in the *Rivista di Scienza*.