

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

FRENCH PHILOSOPHY IN 1926 AND 1927.*

FRENCH philosophy has changed its orientation appreciably in the last twenty years. Twenty years ago the searching and illuminating criticisms of M. Bergson had completely shaken the reigning doctrines—the positivism of Comte, Littré, Taine, Renan and Ribot; the neo-criticism of Renouvier, Pilon, Brochard, Hamelin and the *Critique philosophique*; and the Kantianism or eclectic rationalism of the greater part of the French University. All these philosophies, whether empiricist or rationalist, were of an intellectual cast and attempted, each in its separate way, to find an unassailable foundation for scientific certainty, like Jules Lachelier in his famous thesis on the foundation of induction. Some of them, such as positivism and its derived doctrines, went no farther than a systematizing of the sciences and the technologies founded on them; others desired to go beyond science, but by way of a rationalistic metaphysics. The Kantian ethics was accepted, naturally enough, as a rationalization of conscience. But all these doctrines were severely shaken by Bergsonism and by the various pragmatist movements, which, in spite of their mutual disagreements and their divergence from the doctrines of Bergson, may nevertheless be classed with the latter as a part of the current of ideas called—somewhat inappropriately, but conveniently enough because of the inclusiveness of the term—the anti-intellectualist movement.

It was the criticism of science, naturally, on which this anti-intellectualism thrived. Science had been since the seventeenth century almost the pivot of intellectual civilization. It was the

* Translated from the French by Professor Glenn R. Morrow.