

THE
PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

THE PLACE OF PHILOSOPHY IN AMERICAN
UNIVERSITIES.

WHAT strikes the visitor to American universities, who is himself interested in philosophy, is the general estimation in which the subject is held, and the prominent place it occupies in the curricula. It has a place in the sun that it cannot be said to have in the British universities of the same age and standing. This I believe is the result partly of the theological tradition in some of the older American universities, the effects of which (if not the thing itself) have spread from them to the newer. So far as it is more recent, it is doubtless also the result of the exceptionally distinguished men (James, Royce, Palmer, Dewey, Santayana, to mention no others) who have won the public ear and impressed the community with the practical significance of philosophical theory. It might easily have been otherwise. The study might have got the stamp of exquisiteness and remoteness or of waywardness and eccentricity, justifying the popular impression of the philosopher as the star-gazer who is only not in a lunatic asylum or a jail because he keeps his star-gazing to himself or is too unimportant to do any harm with it. As it is, philosophy has a great and established position, which a stranger coming from universities where it may be said to be still fighting for recognition is apt to envy. The question I wish to raise in this paper is whether it is wholly living up to its opportunities, and whether the impulse and direction I have spoken of as given by great men in the immediate past is not in danger of being lost by