

THE
PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

THE OPPORTUNITY OF PHILOSOPHY.¹

THOSE who have followed recent philosophic discussion, including the symposium² on the brilliant address of my predecessor in office, must have been impressed with the widespread apprehension that philosophy is in danger of losing its job. This apprehension appears in two forms. One is the fear that philosophy is losing its human, personal, inspirational character and is on the point of capitulating to science. The other is the belief that philosophy is losing its scientific character and is surrendering to inspiration and edification—to religion and art.

In the midst of these alarums, it may be reassuring to recall how often in its history the fate of philosophy has 'hung in the balance.' So frequently has this occurred that we may well take courage from the suggestion that philosophy has become accustomed to that position and indeed does not seem to be quite comfortable in any other. Certain it is that the times in which philosophy has been supposed to be about to quit the world have been the times in which philosophy has renewed its youth and started a fresh career. Such apprehensions are the inevitable accompaniment of any period of pronounced reconstruction such as that through which philosophy is now passing and should be hailed as sure signs of life. My own conviction is that philosophy has never shown greater vitality nor had a greater opportunity

¹ Read as the President's address at the annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association held at Princeton University, December 27-28, 1917.

² Cf. THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW for May, 1917.