

THE
PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

THE PROBLEM OF BEAUTY.¹

THE masterly presidential address of my predecessor in this office was devoted to "The Problem of Truth." He spoke with authority a unifying word in the struggles which characterize the American Philosophy of to-day. He focused the interest of our Association on the one central point from which our discussions in recent years have been derived, and there certainly can be no higher mission for such presidential addresses than to give expression in this way to that which stands in the foreground of our thoughts. Yet, is it merely the law of psychical contrast which makes me believe that there is one thing not less important than the center of our interests, namely, the center of our neglects? Am I entirely wrong in thinking that if such a presidential address has to accentuate a certain problem, it may be right to work against philosophical one-sidedness by emphasizing not those problems which are daily with us but those which we have forgotten and almost lost? One-sidedness is nowhere more dangerous than in philosophy, for every true philosophical question and answer is related to the whole philosophical universe. To give attention to a fraction only must always lead to a distorted view of reality. In every other field of intellectual effort, the division of labor may demand a one-sided concentration, and perhaps without serious harm. In philosophy there never was, and never can be, a movement which does not pay a grave penalty for the neglect of any fundamental side of life. Truth and morality, beauty and religion give meaning to our life; and the experience which philosophy seeks to interpret and to understand

¹ Delivered as the presidential address before the Eighth Annual Meeting of the American Philosophical Association at Johns Hopkins University, December 30, 1908.