

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURY MODES OF THOUGHT.¹

EVERYONE who has lived a number of years in the world, must at some time have been impressed by the changes that have taken place in his own ways of thinking and feeling. These changes as a rule take place slowly and imperceptibly, and are forced upon our attention only when we compare our present mental outlook with the thoughts and feelings of a more or less remote period in the past. The most striking example of this is found in the contrast between the simple and naïve attitude which the child takes toward life, and the more complex and sophisticated view of the adult. We soon learn to smile with a kind of wonder at the uncritical assumptions and credulity of our childhood, and it is not difficult to realize how wide is the gulf which separates us from that period of our lives. And even if we were to compare times less widely separated, we should find that our mental life has not remained unchanged. What a difference, for example, four years in college make. One's views regarding science, and literature, and art, regarding one's own nature and duties, and the meaning of life, become vastly transformed during that time. Change is the inevitable and necessary condition of progress. Absolute consistency is the virtue of little minds—of minds that do not grow.

Now what is true regarding the development of the individual

¹ This paper was prepared by the late Professor Creighton for presentation before a philosophical club. The Editors believe that its appearance here will be welcomed.