

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THOUGHT.

IN recent intellectual fashions there is small regard left for the ancient assumption that action is directed by thinking and should be directed by reason. Our sophistication is too well governed by our knowledge of irrational impulses and mechanical sequences for the naive ideal of being governed by knowledge.

One major philosophic school has to be sure maintained the effectiveness of thought. Pragmatism lays great stress upon the instrumental value of 'intelligence'; but this is by contrast with the decried contemplative value of truth sought by intellect, and results in subordinating truth to practical value rather than finding practical value in truth, and thus in scarcely a 'rationalist' program for effective thinking. We are not concerned here with the pragmatist doctrine as to the nature of truth, but with what partly comes from and partly prepares that doctrine: the usual pragmatist understanding of how thought works, which is false in its emphasis at least and misleading.

The general objection to the instrumentalists' account of the influence of thought on action is that they make it too narrowly a before-and-after affair of deliberation and solution of 'concrete problems,' 'present situations,' and immediately 'future alternatives.' They suppose thought always to precede the meeting of predicaments and to have its effect then and there upon that which in prospect called it forth. They do not enough heed the import of that development in psychology which they are fond of using in part, the doctrine that action comes first, thought afterwards; that we do what we are going to do, then give