

# THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

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## RESPONSIBILITY.

1. Man's pride of intellect is nowhere more clearly shown than in his formulation of what he calls principles of action which enable him to persuade himself that he is guided by reason in certain forms of behavior which have been forced upon him by tradition, or have become habitual to him without rational initiative. And it is instructive to note how well satisfied he remains when once he has made such formulations, even where there is patent evidence of grave inconsistencies between these principles and his actual practice.

An interesting instance of such formulation is given in the every-day justification of our current modes of punitive procedure, which are very generally held to be based upon the principle that only those who are guilty are properly punishable, and that only those are guilty who are responsible. And an equally interesting example of our carelessness as to the correspondence between principle and practice is seen in the fact that we can make no pretense whatever to consistency in the application of this principle. We often hold a person responsible for an evil deed, without thinking of him as guilty; as in the case of an experienced mountaineer who over-persuades a mere novice to attempt the ascent of a difficult peak and leads him to his death. And we as often punish those whom we cannot possibly hold guilty of evil intent; as, for instance, the careless chauffeur who runs down a pedestrian.

These are but examples of many that will occur to the reader, and which should certainly lead us to inquire whether the rela-