

THE
PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

PROGRESS IN PHILOSOPHY IN THE LAST
QUARTER CENTURY.¹

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YOU have given me what to me at least appears a high honor—to be a spokesman, for one evening, for Philosophy in America. But I am only your spokesman, and the realization of that fact fills me with a feeling of trepidation much deeper than any pride. For what would you have me do? Surely not to exploit what little learning I may have. Nor yet to discuss, on such an occasion as this, some problem in which I may have a special interest or perhaps some little competence. The only possible excuse for my being here to-night is that I may use what little knowledge—or better, wisdom—I may have, to express something for you.

It is thoughts such as these that have led me to choose the topic I have. For what is it we are all thinking most about on this occasion? Is it not really the state of philosophy in America and in the world? I assume that we all believe in philosophy. Else we would not devote ourselves to that which so obviously bakes no bread. I assume that we all believe in its progress, or possibility of progress. Else we would not work at our researches as we do. Few of us would be disposed to question the priceless value of the fruits of philosophy even if we were sceptical of progress. Yet after all, it is this faith in progress that keeps us going. With us philosophers, however, more perhaps than

¹ Presidential Address, Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association, Smith College, Northampton, Mass., Dec. 29, 1925.