

## THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

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### THE PRESENT PROBLEMS OF GENERAL PSYCHOLOGY.<sup>1</sup>

“THE psychology of our day needs reforming from its very foundations,” said Professor Lipps not very long ago, and indeed proposals for its radical reconstruction are being offered us on every side. Psychology must be thoroughly atomistic and structural, says one: it should be altogether functional, says another. For some it is the central philosophical discipline; for others it is but a department of biology. According to one view, it is merely a descriptive science; according to another, it is explanatory as well. Plainly, then, one of the present problems of psychology is the definition of psychology itself. Yet even this has been denied. “It is preposterous at present to define psychology,” says a recent critic of such an attempt on my part, “preposterous to define psychology save as Bleck long ago defined philology: *es ist was es wird*. It is in a process of rapid development. It has so many lines and departments that if it could be correctly described to-day, all the definitions might be outgrown to-morrow.”<sup>2</sup> There may be a grain of truth in this somewhat extravagant contention. *Ehe es einen guten Wein giebt, muss der Most sich erst toll gebärden*, it has been said. But surely if we could define what is common ground for us all to-day, we might leave to-morrow to take care of itself. This common ground we call ‘General Psychology,’ and the assumption upon which, I take it, we are here proceeding is that the concepts of

<sup>1</sup> Read before the Section of General Psychology of the Congress of Arts and Sciences, held at St. Louis, Sept. 19-26, 1904.

<sup>2</sup> *Am. J. of Psy.*, Vol. XV, p. 295.