

Volume XI.
Number 3.

May, 1902.

Whole
Number 62.

THE
PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

THE PURPOSES OF A PHILOSOPHICAL
ASSOCIATION.¹

IN thinking of a fitting subject upon which to address you on this occasion, I had at first planned to consider two or three fundamental problems which seem to me to be pressing themselves upon our attention, in one form or another, in all the philosophical discussions of the present day. What I had hoped to accomplish was, merely by way of orientation, to discuss the significance of some of the recent contributions to these subjects, and to raise the question whether or not an agreement has not been tacitly reached, which will warrant a restatement of these problems in a new and perhaps more fruitful form. It was largely, though not wholly, an increasing sense of the difficulty of the task, and of my own incompetence, which led me to abandon this plan. For, in addition, as the time of meeting drew on, and it appeared that the papers were to be so numerous and so inclusive in character as almost to constitute an embarrassment of philosophical riches, it seemed better that I should choose a subject of a somewhat different nature, but one which I felt it to be important that should in some form be presented for consideration at this our first meeting, the question of "The Purposes of a Philosophical Association."

In general, when one knows what one wants to do, there is no great advantage, I think, in sitting down and deliberately counting up reasons. But, in the present case, where there are many

¹ Read as the Presidential Address at the first annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association, March 31, 1902.