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## Books

ert Briffault, Alexander Goldenweiser, and Mary Ware Dennett.

### American Humanism


LE MOUVEMENT HUMANISTE AUX ÉTATS-UNIS, by Louis J. A. Mercier; Librairie Hachette, Paris; \$2.00 through Brentano's, New York.

Reviewed by EDWARD C. ASWELL.

STRICTLY speaking, the title of this volume is quite misleading. Written by a professor of French literature at Harvard, and intended for the enlightenment of the French public concerning the current of critical thought in America most deserving of serious study, the book seems to assume, and will certainly leave the impression abroad, that humanism has attained the strength of a concerted movement among us. Americans who may chance to read the book will know that this is hardly so. If humanism has any national significance in America at the present moment, it is the significance of a promise and a hope. As yet there has been little movement.

What has actually taken place has been a profound and very extraordinary germination of thought: profound in scope and significance, for it is a complete philosophy of life looking toward the development of a sound individualism in a democratic society; extraordinary in being the joint creation of three independent minds — William C. Brownell, Irving Babbitt, and Paul Elmer More; and more extraordinary, perhaps, in having won for these thinkers a substantial recognition abroad even while they have remained comparatively unknown at home. M. Mercier has made it his task to interpret the thought of these three men and to coördinate their separate contributions into a single unit or system, which must certainly be recognized as the source of whatever humanistic movement America is to have.

And indeed, there are certain indications in the temper of the times to justify one in believing that a real movement of concert, a real league of forces united on humanistic grounds, may eventually make itself felt. In the last year and a half this magazine has published a series of articles dealing critically with various aspects of contemporary America from the humanistic point of view. The general response demonstrates unmistakably that there is a rather considerable leaven of intelligent people scattered throughout the country who cannot view with indifference the general decay of standards and the resultant chaos into which our intellectual and moral life has been plunged. Many, even among college sophomores, are apparently losing patience with Mr. H. L. Mencken's mode of criticism,



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