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PHILOSOPHIE DE LA LITTÉRATURE OU HISTOIRE DE LA LITTÉRATURE¹

LA ROMANIC REVIEW a donné un compte-rendu du livre de M. Magendie: *La politesse mondaine et les théories de l'honnêteté en France au XVII^e siècle*, par M. J. E. Spingarn. Le compte-rendu est fort intéressant. Il témoigne d'une connaissance approfondie du sujet qui n'étonnera pas tous ceux qui connaissent les remarquables travaux de M. Spingarn sur la littérature européenne de la Renaissance, c'est-à-dire tous les historiens de la littérature. Il est intéressant aussi parce qu'il est extrêmement sévère, non pas seulement pour M. Magendie, mais pour une école critique française dont M. Magendie serait le représentant ou, du moins, la menace:

"In the days when the two dreams were still real for me, I entertained a very high regard for French doctoral dissertations,

¹ In this interesting article, which contains a discussion of the ideas on critical method of Professors Spingarn and Folkierski, Professor Mornet brings to the fore problems of intense interest to all students of literature. Many scholars are fully conscious of the insufficiency of the methods of literary research that have become standardized during the past twenty-five years or more. There is no doubt an exit from the *impasse* in which we are, in a way, groping at present—or, to use another figure of speech, some middle ground between the extremes of the so-called *fiche* system on the one hand and the unbridled tendency to generalize on literature *in vacuo* and without documentary precision on the other. Some of the recent attempts at building "comparative" literature upon unproven international influences may well be open to question, but a narrow nationalistic outlook seems equally unsatisfactory and antiquated. The Editors of the ROMANIC REVIEW are confident that this able presentation of a conservative point of view by Professor Mornet will tend to stimulate discussion of these vital problems; and they are, therefore, pleased to open the columns of the ROMANIC REVIEW to opinions emanating from authoritative sources.—EDITOR'S NOTE.