

WHAT'S WHAT IN AMERICA

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What's what in America by Eugene V. Brewster

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EUGENE V. BREWSTER

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BY

Eugene V. Brewster

EDITOR OF

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Preface

AMERICA is a heterogeneous conglomeration of humans comprising a homogeneity. They are all alike, yet they are unlike. All corners of the earth have contributed in the making, yet the one hundred millions have all been blended together into the huge melting pot and we call them Americans. They were attracted to "the land of the free" and remain here because no other country offers such prizes and such liberty. All are engaged in a wild scramble for fame and fortune, yet they are sadly disorganized. While they have their labor unions, churches, colleges, societies, and cults galore, and while they have their governments (city, county, state and national), and while the more successful ones (capitalists) have their organizations (trusts, monopolies and banking institutions), there is no organization of the whole. Nobody seems to take into account the tremendously important fact that all men and all industries are now interdependent, and that therefore they must all be organized into one organization.

One of the most marvellous things in America is the fact that we are so unorganized that at any mo-

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ment the whole nation may be tied up and bound hand and foot by strikes. Any morning we may wake up and find the nation paralyzed. Labor is becoming so organized that all industries are at its mercy. The cost of living continues to rise, and we are powerless to prevent profiteers from monopolizing our products and making prices to suit themselves. We have no way to make people work if they don't want to, even if we starve. Under our present laws we cannot prevent strikes and walk-outs, even if we perish. There is nothing to prevent a few men from cornering the market on all commodities and paralyzing the nation's industries.

And yet there is a remedy, and a simple one.

Free thought reigns supreme in America, and the national mind and character have been moulded in a remarkably liberal manner.

A nation that embraces a multitude of believers in such theories as phrenology, Christian Science, osteopathy, astrology, spiritism, etc., and which adopts these and other fads as religions, must indeed be an over-credulous if not a fanatical one. Some of these isms and ologies have been dissected and analyzed in the following pages, and these little essays have been inserted parenthetically, as it were. They tend to prove that Barnum was right when he said, "The American public loves to be humbugged."

Here in America, not so many years ago, we were burning people at the stake and punishing innocent persons for witchcraft. Still later some of our best people were holding converse with departed spirits who were otherwise busying themselves with upset-

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ting tables, painting portraits, etc. And it is so even now. Thousands of intelligent Americans are now being guided in all their affairs by mediums, astrologists, palmists, clairvoyants, etc. Some years ago I had occasion to make a more or less thorough investigation of some of these isms and ologies, and in the following chapters I have given some of the results.

Our forefathers came here to escape religious persecutions at home, but one of the first things they did on landing was to impose the penalty of death on all those who should dissent from their own religious beliefs. These and other similar Puritanic orders have done much to prevent the growth and development of the arts in America. We have had liberty and freedom to excess, in some respects, yet in other respects we have been tied hand and foot. We are not yet a full-grown nation. America is still in its infancy of development.

It is also interesting to note how Americans follow a chosen leader like so many sheep, and how and why certain leaders become popular. Hence, a few chapters have been added which treat of men, habits, popularity, greatness, the public, etc.

The author makes no apology for the fact that these little articles were not written with the intention of inserting them in this volume. It is obvious that they were not. Nevertheless, they are given here for what they are worth, because they may be helpful in showing What's What in America.

THE AUTHOR.

December 15, 1919.

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