

**FRENCH CRITICISM OF
AMERICAN LITERATURE
BEFORE 1850**

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French Criticism of American Literature Before 1850 by Harold Elmer Mantz

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BY

HAROLD ELMER MANTZ, PH.D.



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TO
MY GRANDFATHER AND GRANDMOTHER
WARREN AND VIRGINIA WHITE ELMER

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NOTE

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of Romance Languages and Literatures in Columbia
University.*

HENRY ALFRED TODD

NEW YORK

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FOREWORD

IN the following study an attempt is made to discover French opinion on the subject of American literature, from about the beginning of the nineteenth century to about the year 1850. While it is thus primarily a contribution to the history of French criticism, it deals with one of the least important of its aspects, both because of the scarcity of American literary works of excellence, and because but few French critics of ability wrote about those that did exist. Thus, in the first part of the investigation, it will be necessary to depend in large part on scanty notices of translations, or of American books come into the hands of the editors of French periodicals. Gradually, more extended reviews will be made, and the merely bibliographical details will lose the importance they at first had as the only indications of the knowledge of American literature possessed by the French. It is not the purpose of this study to furnish an indication of all notices bearing on books by American authors; thus indications of mere booksellers' announcements, when no criticism is offered in connection, are generally omitted in the last two decades. On

the other hand, all the criticism in the representative French periodicals dealing with American literature, and in the books written about the United States, so far as indicated in the bibliography, has been presented.

But these periodicals have been selected merely as containing judgments fairly representative of the general French idea of our literature. Not only is no complete bibliography intended — although such a work would have been much appreciated had it existed — but no analysis is attempted of many articles or books touching the subject. It is probable that no one will be tempted to compile and index all that has been written in France on American literature. The present volume, in any event, is intended to supply a general view of its department of French criticism until the bibliography shall have been made, and then utilized from the standpoint from which this book has been written.

I wish to thank Professor Adolphe Cohn, Professor John L. Gerig, Dr. Carl Van Doren, and very particularly Professor Henry A. Todd for corrections and encouragement. To Professor Todd I am obliged, in addition, for a patient reading of the proof.

