

THE
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PHILOSOPHY IN FRANCE, 1920.¹

I.

TWO years ago I called attention to the fact that although the war had so greatly limited the output of constructive, systematic philosophy in France, it seemed to have affected much less the number of works relating to the history of philosophy.² Is this due to the fact that works of the latter kind do not touch so closely the keen anxieties and difficulties of the present hour, which weigh so heavily not only upon the life of the individual but also upon that of society? And is it because by such work the mind is diverted and a refuge provided for one's thoughts? We shall see that it is scarcely possible to account in this way for all these works on the history of philosophy. On the other hand, may the explanation be found in this fact—that such studies can be carried on with a less carefree mind and, to use the expression popularized by M. Pierre Janet, with the minimum of '*tension psychologique*'? Perhaps we shall have to accept one reason in some cases, and another in others. However that may be, the fact is that, during the past year also, historical works have been by far the most numerous and the most important.

First rank, by common consent, is awarded to the masterly work of Hamelin, *Le Système d'Aristote*.³ However, this is not

¹ Translated from the French by Lucy Shepard Crawford.

² See THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW, September, 1919.

³ 1 vol., 8vo, III, 497 pages, Edited by M. L. Robin. Alcan, publisher. (In regard to Hamelin, his philosophical doctrine and his death, see THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW, May, 1908, pp. 291, 299-303; and September, 1920, p. 432.)