SOME NEW BOOKS.

The San Francisco Vigilance Committee of 1856.

Mr. H. H. BANCROFT, the author of the *History of the Pacific States*, now in course of publication (San Francisco, the History Co.), has devoted his two latest volumes to an account of the popular tribunals which, owing to the shortcomings in the normal machinery of justice, were from time to time established in the States and Territories west of the Rocky Mountains. Of these volumes, the first, which appeared some months ago, was allotted to the San Francisco Vigilance Committee of 1851, and to the minor organizations which, in outlying settlements, were called into being by its example. The volume now before us was reserved for the exhibition of the acts of the much more famous tribunal which the citizens of San Francisco substituted for the ordinary law courts in 1856.

There had been, as Mr. Bancroft shows us in some preliminary chapters, no diminution of crime in San Francisco after the terror exerted by the committee of 1851 had spent its force, but there had been a marked change in the methods of criminals. At the earlier epoch they had defied the law, but they had now learned how to paralyze its arm by controlling its administrators. At the primary meeting and the ballot box they laid a broad and solid basis for their depredations on the community. A burglar or a murderer, if apprehended in the act, no longer troubled himself to resist arrest or escape from imprisonment. The policeman who seized him, the Sheriff upon whose selection depended the composition of the jury, and the Judge who was to try him were his cronies and his creatures.

The jail was a place of refuge, the court room a place of redemption. There was absolutely no post in the whole administrative and judicial hierarchy, from that of Governor or United States Senator to that of inspectors at a primary meeting, which crime could not approach and influence in a thousand subtle ways. What passed for public opinion reflected nothing but the interests and designs of rascals; the virtue, the probity, the conscience of the community seemed to possess no voice; the whole press of San Francisco, with the exception of a single newspaper, was muzzled by intimidation or debauched by bribery. The single exception was the *Evening Bulletin*, a paper owned and edited by Mr. James King, and it was the determination of the lawbreakers to stifle the one remaining mouthpiece of decency and rectitude by King's assassination that called forth the vast latent forces of society, and produced the moral earthquake of May, 1856.

In the *Bulletin* of May 14, Mr. King had alluded to the notorious fact that one James Casey, the proprietor of the *Sunday Times*, and who had lately been elected Supervisor through the ballot stuffing carried out by the blackleg, Yankee Sullivan, was a discharged convict, who had done the State of New York service in Sing Sing prison. A few hours after the appearance of the paper, the editor was shot by Casey in Montgomery street, not far from the Bank Exchange, and died six days later. With equanimity and perfect faith in impunity, Casey suffered some of the bystanders, who were his personal friends, to lead him quietly to jail, which, from Casey's point of view, was an asylum from a possible outburst of popular violence. The jailer who would detain him, and the Judge before whom he expected to be arraigned, were among his trusted friends. His calculations were entirely justified by his experience, but he had not counted on a sudden revival of the Vigilance Committee.

On the very evening after the shooting of King, William T. Coleman, a member of the Committee of Thirteen, to which on disbanding the original committee of 1851 had transmitted certain powers, issued a call convoking for the following morning all respectable citizens disposed to organize a popular tribunal. At this meeting an executive committee of twelve was chosen, and Mr. Coleman was made President. So numerous and rapid were the applications for admission that by 8 P. M. on May 15 not less than 1,500 men had been enrolled in companies, and these numbers before morning were swelled to 2,000. By Saturday, May 17, 5,000 citizens had joined, and at the some of its efficiency the Vigilance Committee of 1856 consisted of one battalion, four companies of artillery, one squadron, two troops of dragoons, four regiments and thirty-two companies of infantry, in all 6,000 men under arms, well drilled and thoroughly equipped with the needful munitions of war. As early as May 17, while King was yet alive, the committee secured headquarters on Sacramento street, which were immediately fortified, and were thereafter known as Fort Gunnybags. When these rooms were thrown open for public exhibition they contained a reserve stock of 1,900 muskets, 250 rifles, 378 sabres, 55 artillery swords, four brass six-pounders, two iron nine-pounders mounted on ship carriages, five two and four pounders, and harness for some thirty horses. In this improvised arsenal the murderer Casey and another confessed man slayer, Cora (who had been taken from the jail by 3,000 members of the Vigilance Committee two days before), were, on May 20, the day of King's death, summarily tried and condemned to be hanged, a sentence which was executed from a window of the fortress on May 22.

It is interesting to read the author's reference to Mr. William T. Coleman, who was, as we have seen, the prime mover and chief actor in this imposing demonstration of citizens determined to break the letter to carry out the purpose of the law, and who, being invested with supreme judicial and paramount executive authority, was for months an autocrat more absolute in San Francisco than the Czar is in St. Petersburg. "From a lumber business in St. Louis, William T. Coleman, in the summer of 1849, came to California, gold hunting. He soon, however, entered into traffic, first at the tented city of Sacramento, next at Placerville, and then at San Francisco. His early life was the school of business experience—a hand-to-hand conflict with fortune where lusty strength was guided by wits newly whetted each morning for the day's encounter. During his career I find no trace of questionable transactions, of business aberrations, and those double dealings, not to say fraudulent failures and downright swindles, which stain the early record of so many who have since achieved pecuniary success. On the contrary, Mr. Coleman's life has been one of honorable example from the beginning. Brought into prominence by superior skill and application, his good name has ever been a shining mark for calumny, yet always one from which the fiery darts of evil-minded men fell harmless. No man has done more to elevate the standard of commercial morals in California, or to strengthen the commercial credit of San Francisco. During the Eastern financial panic of 1857, when confidence was broken and California's reputation particularly low, Mr. Coleman, almost single-handed, wrought in New York an entire revulsion in feeling concerning Pacific coast credits. If there be one whom it were safe to hold up as a model Californian, this is the man." Elsewhere Mr. Bancroft tells us that "Mr. Coleman, though as thoroughly saturated a Californian as ever lived, was a gentleman in the highest sense of the term. He was possessed of honesty and integrity, which some who call themselves gentlemen lack. He had a bright, clear intellect, trained and burnished, and a well-stored mind, always ready for use—qualities which many so-called gentlemen deem superfluous. To qualities of mind which did him honor were added kindness of heart and genial courtesy."

Mr. Coleman and his associates of the Vigilance Committee of 1856 met with a far more resolute and potent opposition than had been encountered in 1851 by the irregular enforcers of respect for property and life. The Governor of the State, though at first undecided, soon invoked all his powers for the suppression of the Vigilance Committee, proceeding against them through the judiciary and the police, calling out the militia, and issuing a proclamation declaring the county of San Francisco in a state of insurrection, and finally, on June 19, appealing to President Pierce for the interposition of the military and naval commandants of the Federal forces on the Pacific coast. This request was refused by Secretary Marcy, in a despatch based on the opinion of Attorney-General Caleb Cushing, but the Governor did not withdraw his own proclamation until Nov. 3. Of the course taken by Gov. Johnson at this extraordinary crisis, Mr. Bancroft thinks that it demonstrates "his unfitness for the emergency, his weakness as a ruler, his duplicity as a politician, and his dishonesty as a man. He first tacitly sanctions the actions of the Vigilance Committee by counselling with them as to the best method of removing the unhanged villains, and by advising the Sheriff to yield up Casey and Cora; then, at the instigation of bloodthirsty advisers, he exhausts himself in efforts to deluge the streets of San Francisco in the blood of her best citizens. His proclamation was ill-advised, illegal, and filled with false statements. Too cowardly to oppose the Vigilance Committee at the outset, too tyrannical to give it his adhesion when its manifest object was the reestablishment of popular sovereignty, Gov. Johnson secured the friendship of no good man on either side, and was left in full enjoyment of the hearty, unanimous contempt of both sides." Of the so-called Law and Order party, which Johnson and his successor, Weller, professed to represent, Mr. Bancroft does not hesitate to say that, in 1856, and for three years afterward, it was "a society for the suppression of virtue, an organization for the promotion of murder."

The San Francisco Vigilance Committee of 1856, like that of 1851, hanged only four men and banished only about thirty. We have seen how Casey and Cora were dealt with; the other two victims of the extreme penalty were named Hetherington and Brace. The former, who had long enjoyed impunity, was arrested and tried by the Vigilants for the robbery of one Southwick in the previous year, for the shooting and robbing of a Mr. Scharff, and, thirdly, for the murder of J. B. West in June, 1855. Hetherington, who, as his name shows, was an Englishman, bore a still more infamous character, having committed many crimes, among others the murder of Dr. Baldwin in 1853, and that of Dr. Randall on July 24, 1856. Within a few moments after perpetrating the latter homicide, Hetherington was seized by a detachment of Vigilants and conveyed to their headquarters. Within four days he and Brace had been summarily tried, found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged. The sentence was carried out on July 29, and it may be well to recall the circumstances of the execution, in order to show how hopeless it would have been for the regular authorities to try to obstruct the action of the committee: "A scaffold was erected on Davis street, between Sacramento and Commercial, and a force of Vigilants (on this occasion numbering about 1,800) was called out under arms. By 3 o'clock an immense concourse of spectators had assembled, filling the streets, balconies, windows, and roofs for four or five squares round. Infantry companies were marched out and posted at various points, commanding every avenue of approach to the committee building. Beyond these the cavalry were stationed. Loaded brass cannon were placed at every corner of the square, and the gunners stood by with torches ready lighted. Thus the military surrounded the entire block within which was situated the Vigilance Committee building. The scaffold rose in a dense square of soldiers four or five feet deep. All the while the scaffold was building the Vigilant forces were manœuvring about the vicinity, marching and countermarching, all under Marshall Doane, with aides-de-camp riding hither and thither." Evidently a rescue of the doomed men by the State and city authorities was entirely impracticable.

Another interesting incident in the record of the Vigilance Committee of 1856 was the arrest, trial, and suicide in prison of the notorious blackleg and ballot-box stuffer, Yankee Sullivan. This fellow was an Irish prize fighter, whose only claim to the appellation "Yankee" came from his having worn in one of his fights a handkerchief with the American flag painted on it. He was a Sydney convict who had escaped to New Zealand, and thence, when the gold fever broke out, had, like many another ruffian, made his way to San Francisco. The crime for which he was arrested was ballot-box stuffing, and before his death he made a confession containing some startling revelations with regard to the frauds committed by him and his accomplices at the Presidio polls. He was sentenced, not to death, but to expatriation; yet Sullivan, four days afterward, apparently believing that the committee would discover some of his more flagrant crimes, and hang him after all, cut his throat in his cell. It was said, indeed, that the suicide was really due to the denial of the stimulants to which the prisoner had long been accustomed, his normal indulgence having been from fifty to eighty drinks a day. With such habits it is not perhaps surprising that, under the sudden substitution of tea and coffee, his nervous system should have been sensibly depressed.

The sentence of expatriation, was, as we have seen, applied to only about thirty. "It amounted," says the author, "in most cases, simply to a free passage (to the Sandwich Islands, Panama, or the Atlantic States) for some devotee of the derringer, election bludgeon-brandsher, or other social vulture, who, having terminated his career in California, and wrought there all the mischief possible, now sought another clime where, unknown to the police, he might begin anew. Travel being prescribed, and the noxious individual being out of money, as those who live upon the public usually are, he was duly provided for and escorted to the vessel by the committee. So that a verdict like the following: 'Mr. Cunningham [such was the name of one of the men condemned to banishment], you have been found guilty of passing altered coin and of robbing the dead. Your sentence is that you leave this State, never to return, under penalty of death,' merely signified to Mr. Cunningham that his passage hence would be paid, but stipulated that he must not return. Why should, however, Mr. Cunningham wish to return? Could he not do better in a country where the dead had not as yet been robbed?"

In only one instance did an involuntary exile return to California during the active operations of the committee. A thief named Bulger had been shipped by the Vigilants to Honolulu, but returned by the same vessel. He was at once arrested and put on trial for his life. He only escaped the death sentence by the confession of the member of the committee who had notified him of the order of exile that he had forgotten to mention that a violation of the mandate would subject him to the death penalty. He was accordingly a second time expelled from California, and evinced this time no wish to return.

After the Vigilance Committee was supposed to have disbanded, one Gallagher, who had been a night watchman in the Custom House, returned to San Francisco, and during the year 1858 libelled the vessel which had conveyed him to the Sandwich Islands, and the United States Court gave him $3,000 damages. Gallagher tried to sell his judgment for $2,000 to the Executive Committee which had survived the disbandment of the Vigilants. They would not purchase, and, as about the same time they were known to have made inquiries as to the state of the Vigilant forces in case of an emergency, Gallagher and his lawyers arrived at the conclusion that the committee did not intend to pay the damages. Duane, another expatriated citizen, who returned in 1860, got from the United States District Court a judgment for $4,000, which, however, the Supreme Court cut down to $60. A suggestive fact, as showing how much pleasanter a place of sojourn for scoundrels New York was than San Francisco at that epoch, is chronicled with reference to Mr. Billy Mulligan, who after a life of crime, was finally killed by a San Francisco policeman in July, 1865. In June, 1858, Mr. Mulligan, who two years previously had been invited to leave San Francisco, happened to meet in the barroom of the Metropolitan Hotel a reputable Californian named Hiram H. Webb. "Oh, you are the man, are you," yelled Mulligan, "who helped to drive me out of California?" And with these words dealt Webb a blow which rendered him almost senseless. Mulligan was at the time protected by his friends, and although he was next day arrested, and underwent the form of trial, he was discharged. This incident is mentioned by Mr. Bancroft as an example of what travelling Vigilants were subjected to for years after the crusade had closed. To decent Americans it is not particularly gratifying to be reminded that this man Mulligan professed to be an ardent Unionist during the war of the rebellion, and aided in raising the Empire City Regiment.

The case of Judge Terry (who afterward killed Broderick in a duel) deserves some attention, because the result of his trial excited much irritation and some distrust on the part of the rank and file of the Vigilance Committee against the Executive Board. He was arrested and imprisoned by Vigilants on June 21, 1856. He was charged with divers breaches of the peace, with resisting by violence the officers of the Committee of Vigilance, and finally with committing an assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill one Hopkins, a member of the committee. As a matter of fact Hopkins had entirely recovered before the trial of the prisoner. Mr. Bancroft is outspoken—and we do not see how any candid reader can help concurring with him—in approving the judgment pronounced in this case by the Executive Committee, notwithstanding the adverse vote and remonstrance of a large number of vigilants. The Executive Committee acted in strict pursuance of the principles and precedents to which they had previously conformed. Only two forms of punishment, death and expatriation, were in their power, and there was no evidence that Terry had deserved the infliction of either penalty. He was accordingly discharged, and we can now see that had the Executive Committee done otherwise it would have merited severer stricture than any to which it has ever been subjected.

Let us look now at Mr. Bancroft's deliberate judgment on the record of the Vigilance Committee of 1856, as we find it expressed in one of the closing chapters of this narrative. The judgment is embodied in the form of a comparison between this popular tribunal and its predecessor. "The crimes," says the author, "committed by the victims of the first Vigilance Committee [that of 1851] were against property and life, while those perpetrated by the victims of the second were strongly tinctured with political immorality. McDougal, Governor in 1851, bowed to what he recognized as the popular will, and kept faith in his promise not to interfere with the committee, save in appearance only. Johnson, Governor in 1856, after making the same promise, broke it, opposed the committee to the utmost of his power, and thereby increased their labor and prolonged their existence. The reformation of 1851 was transient and superficial; that of 1856 was radical and permanent." After the lapse of five short years the wholesome achievements of the earlier committee seem to have been utterly forgotten. The work done by the second is remembered to this day.

M. W. H.

Renan's History of the People of Israel.

M. ERNEST RENAN has just published the first volume of the long-promised *History of the People of Israel* (1 vol., Calmann Lévy). Without further preamble let us talk together about this most fascinating book, beginning at the beginning with the preface. For the philosophic mind, says M. Renan, there are in the past of humanity only three histories of first-class interest—the history of Greece, of Israel, and of Rome, which three histories combined constitute the history of civilization. In this work of civilization M. Renan attributes the highest rôle to Greece, which founded in the full meaning of the term, rational and progressive humanism. "Our science, our art, our literature, our philosophy, our morality, our politics, our strategy, our diplomacy, our maritime and international law, are Greek in origin. The framework of human culture created by Greece is susceptible of being indefinitely enlarged; but it is complete in its parts. Progress will eternally consist in developing what Greece conceived."

In the circle of her intellectual and moral activity Greece had but one gap, and that gap was very considerable. She despised the humble, and felt no need of a just God. Her philosophers, while dreaming of the immortality of the soul, were tolerant toward the iniquities of the world. Her religions remained charming municipal child's play; the idea of a universal religion never came to her. The ardent genius of the Israelites supplied what was wanting in the Hellenic mind. Israel was never content to see the world so badly governed, under the government of a God who was supposed to be just. The wise men of Israel waxed wroth in presence of the abuses in which the world abounds. A bad man dying old, rich and tranquil, filled their hearts with rage. The prophets, beginning in the ninth century before Christ, give to this idea the proportions of a dogma. The Israelite prophets, says M. Renan, are spirited publicists of the kind which we should now call Socialists or Anarchists. They are fanatical seekers after social justice, and they proclaim aloud that if the world is not just, or capable of being made just, it is better that it should be destroyed; a very mistaken but still very fruitful way of looking at things; for, like all the doctrines of despair, like Russian nihilism in our own days, for instance, it produces heroism and a grand awakening of human forces. The founders of Christianity, direct continuers of the work of the prophets, wear themselves out in an incessant appeal for the end of the world, and, strange to say, they finally transform the world. By Jesus, by the apostles, and by the second Christian generation, a religion, issue of Judaism, is established; and three centuries later this religion is imposed upon the most important races of humanity, and takes the place of the little patriotic toys of the ancient cities. With the churches, which are merely synagogues opened to the uncircumcised, is born an idea of popular association which contrasts strongly with the democracy of the Greek towns. In a word, Christianity becomes in history an element as capital as the liberal rationalism of the Greeks, though in certain respects less sure of eternity. The tendency which inclines the nineteenth century to secularize everything, to deprive many things of the ecclesiastical character which they used to possess, is a reaction against Christianity; but even supposing that this movement is carried out to the extreme, Christianity will still leave an indelible trace. Liberalism will be no longer alone to govern the world. England and America will long retain remnants of biblical influence, and in France the Socialists, unconscious pupils of the prophets, will always oblige rationalist politics to reckon with them.

In order to make the world accept Hellenism and Christianity, it needed to be prepared and smoothed over during several centuries. A great humanitarian force had to be created which should be capable of throwing down the obstacles that local patriotism opposed to the idealist propaganda of Greece and Judæa. Rome filled this extraordinary rôle. Rome, by prodigies of civic virtue, created power in the world, and this power served to propagate the work of Greece and of Judæa, or, in other words, to propagate civilization. "Power," says M. Renan, "is not an amiable thing, and the souvenirs of Rome will never have the mighty attraction of Greek and Jewish matters; Roman history, nevertheless, forms part of those histories which are the pivot of the others, and which may be called providential, because their place is, as it were, marked in a plan superior to the every day oscillations of things. I say providential, and not miraculous. In the progress of humanity everything issues from one identical principle, at once natural and ideal. If any histories are miraculous, there are at least three. Jewish history, which claims the monopoly of miracles, is not a more extraordinary fact than Greek history. If supernatural intervention is needed to explain the one, supernatural intervention is also necessary to explain the other. I will even say that in my opinion the greatest of the miracles of history is Greece. The simultaneous apparition in the Hellenic race of all that constitutes the honor and ornament of the human mind, strikes me much more than the passage dry-foot of the Red Sea or the Jordan. Happy the man who will write the history of Greece with love, at the age of 60, after having employed his whole life in studying the works that learned schools have devoted to it!"

Although M. Renan envies the future historian of Greece, he does not regret what he calls his "Nazarean's vow," which early in life bound him to the Jewish and Christian problem. "Jewish and Christian history," he says, "have constituted the joy of eighteen centuries, and although now half conquered by Greek rationalism, they have still an astonishing efficacy in improving morals. The Bible, in its different transformations, is, in spite of everything, humanity's great book of consolation. It is not impossible that, wearied of the repeated bankruptcy of liberalism, the world will once more become Jewish and Christian. It is, then, above all, that it will be a fortunate thing if the disinterested history of these great things has been written; for the period of impartial studies on the part of humanity will, perhaps, be not very long. The taste for history is the most aristocratic of all tastes; it is in danger."

After enunciating these grand, luminous, and novel general ideas, M. Renan explains to us his plan of present and future work. During the past six years he has been working on this history of the Jews, and his history is now complete down to the time of Esdras, that is to say, down to the definitive constitution of Judaism. These three volumes might be published at once if M. Renan were to die, but his intention is to devote two more years to polishing them, and so the second volume will appear in a year's time from now, and the third in two years' time. After that, if he still lives, M. Renan will write the history of the Asmoneans, which will connect directly with the life of Jesus and the history of the first hundred and fifty years of Christianity. Thus he will have completed the cycle of history which he wished to review, and so be able to say, with old Simeon, *Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum, in pace.*

In M. Renan's first volume the great religious movement of Israel, which carried the whole world along with it, is scarcely begun. Israel's vocation is not evident. At first glance you might take it for an ordinary Syro-Arab tribe. But the childhood of the elect is full of promises and prognostics, and it is in the ages of the patriarchs that the destiny of Israel begins to be visible. Without the patriarchal age nothing in the history of Israel can be explained. But what documents have we concerning this period? Before David are there any certain facts? No; but nevertheless we may know many things about epochs anterior to history. The Homeric poems are not history, and yet they present a brilliant picture of Greek life a thousand years before Christ. The Arthurian romances of the middle ages do not contain one word of truth, and yet they are treasure houses of information about the social life of the epoch. In such cases what we want to know is not how events happened, but how they might have happened; so that we may be sure that what is not true in one case is true in another. In his task M. Renan has utilized the methods of modern criticism, and the results of the researches of the modern German and Dutch palæographers and Assyriographers, as well as the works of his erudite colleague of the Institut, M. Maspero, the great Egyptologist.

The conclusion of M. Renan's preface must be translated in full. Here it is:

"Since I first began to speak to the public of religious history, forty years ago, grave changes have taken place. On the basis of religion there is no longer any discussion, and this, I think, is a very marked progress; it is a recognition of the fact that in the infinite there is room for each one to build his own romance. Liberty in the American fashion is the consequence of this state of things, and I believe that in a hundred years almost all civilized nations will come to it. We can wait patiently, because already at the present day, in almost all civilized countries, no one is constrained to acts against his conscience, each one being free to contract marriage, educate his children, and order his funeral as he thinks proper. This is an immense result. The moment we admit that all churches, without being of equal value, are a matter of tradition, and not of absolute truth, there is no reason to be at variance on that which is only a material historical fact. The interminable polemics occasioned by the struggles of Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism have lost all utility outside the historical movement which they have caused. This historical interest, at any rate, remains intact. Men will long concern themselves with religions after they have ceased to believe in them. The ruin of theology does not imply the ruin of the history of theology, any more than the small interest now attached to the study of metaphysical philosophy deprives the history of ancient philosophy of its interest. To see the past as it really was is the highest joy of man and the noblest of his curiosities. It is always good to know the truth. If we could know the truth on the past and on the present of humanity we should be perfect sages. Every fault is due to an error. If Louis XIV. had learned the history of Protestantism from better sources than that of his Gallican theologians, he would not have revoked the edict of Nantes. If Saint Louis had been more enlightened on the history of the Church he would not have allowed his subjects to be decimated by the Inquisition. If Marcus Aurelius had been more familiar with the history of Christianity the atrocious scenes of the amphitheatre of Lyons would not have taken place. If the legislators of the Revolution had better known the essence of Catholicism, since the Council of Trent, they would not have dreamed of a national church for France. If the Radical party at the present day were less ignorant of religious history they would know that religions are like women—if you know how to proceed it is easy to obtain everything from them, but if you proceed by force it is impossible to obtain anything.

"Is this skeptical or negative result the only one which we get from the study of these long errors? Is it then of such great consequence to know by what stages poor humanity has passed in order to arrive at the point whence we see that the summits of Olympus and Sinai are desert, that heaven is empty and the earth quite small, that thunder is a phenomenon of more apparent than real amplitude, that the rainbow is nothing but the play of light refracted in rain drops? No; the reasoning of Kant remains as true as ever: moral affirmation creates its object. Religions, like systems of philosophy, are all vain; but religion itself is no more vain than philosophy is vain. Without the hope of any recompense man devotes himself for duty even unto death. Victim of the injustice of his fellows he raises his eyes toward heaven. A generous cause in which he has no interest often makes his heart beat. The *Elohim* do not dwell in the eternal snows; we do not meet them, as in the days of Moses, in mountain passes; they dwell in the hearts of men. You will never drive them thence. Justice, truth, virtue, are required by a superior force. The progress of reason has been fatal only to false gods. The true God of the universe, the only God, the God that one adores by doing a good action, or by seeking truth, or by giving good advice to men, is established for all eternity. It is the certitude of having served, after my manner, in spite of shortcomings of all kinds, this excellent cause, which inspires me with absolute confidence in Divine goodness. It is the conviction that this book will be useful to religious progress which has made me love it. As I did for the "Life of Jesus," I beg for this present work, devoted to very obscure times, a little of that indulgence which men are accustomed to grant to seers, and of which seers stand much in need. Even if my conjectures on certain points are erroneous, I am sure of having well understood, as a whole, the unique work which the breath of God, that is the soul of the universe, realized through Israel."

This eloquent preface, so full of luminous generalities and suggestive summaries of thought, leads us to the first book of the History, which treats of the Beni-Israel in the nomad state before their establishment in the land of Canaan. Little has been written in the present century more fascinating than M. Renan's description of the life of the patriarchs—more imposing by the grandness and plausibility of its conjectures, more instinct with poetic glamor of language, more impressed with that dazzling glory of aspect, and that penetrating charm which makes the listener or the spectator quiver with joyous emotion as he listens to noble verse or contemplates a masterpiece of sculpture or of painting. To analyze or to quote passages can give no idea of the sustained interest of these chapters, where the author evokes, with grandiose simplicity, a picture of prehistoric life, and follows the moral progress of man from the condition of an apish satyr down to the noble existence of the pastoral and monotheistic patriarch of the wandering tribes of the Beni-Israel. The chapters on the development of the monotheistic idea are most curious and most erudite. M. Renan, however, constantly warns us against ante-dating monotheism, and attributing to the monotheism of the Israelites previous to the ninth century, B. C., a consistence which it did not possess. The conception of the Semites was certainly superior to the polytheistic conception of the Aryans, with their multitude of special and local gods. The nomad Semitic race was the religious race par excellence, because it was the least superstitious of all the human families. The very earliest nomad Semite pastors bore on their brow the seal of God, and the purport of their mission, which was to suppress superstition. From a certain point of view the history of Israel is that of a slow transformation of the monotheistic idea, a return to the primitive patriarchal state when God had no name, no personality, when the divine element was simply called *Elohim*, "spirits." The names of Jehovah, Chemosh, Rimmon, &c., are names which are found only after Israel settles as a nation. Iahvé, which we call Jehovah, is a particular god, the god of a family, of a special country; the religious progress of Israel will consist of depriving Iahvé of personal traits, and leaving him only the abstract existence of the Elohim. Elohim is the universal god, the god of the human race. "In reality," says M. Renan, "the world has been converted to Elohim, and not to Iahvé. The world has become deist, that is to say elohist, and not Iahvéist. Nay more, the world has forgotten the very pronunciation of Iahvé; each one will eternally attribute to it the vowels he pleases. Neither Christianity nor Islamism know Iahvé. It is a word absolutely eliminated from pious usage; it is the name of a barbarous and foreign god."

Speaking of the genius of the Hebrew language, M. Renan compares it to "a quiver full of steel arrows, a mightily twisted cable, a brazen trombone tearing the air with two or three shrill notes. Such a language will express neither a philosophical thought, nor a scientific result, nor a doubt, nor a sentiment of impiety. The letters of its books will be counted; but they will be letters of fire. The language will not say much; but what it has to say it will beat out on an anvil. It will shed floods of anger; it will utter cries of rage against the abuses of the world; it will summon the four winds of heaven to storm the citadel of evil. Like the jubilee horn in the sanctuary, it will serve for no profane use; it will never express the innate joy of conscience nor the serenity of nature; but it will sound the holy war against injustice; it will have accents of festivity and accents of terror. Happily the Hellenic genius will compose for the expression of the joys and sadness of the soul, a seven-stringed lute which will vibrate in unison with all that is human, a grand organ with a thousand pipes which will be equal to the harmonies of life. Greece will know all kinds of delights, from the dance in chorus on the summits of Taygetus to the banquet of Aspasia, from the smile of Alcibiades to the austerity of the Portico, from the song of Anacreon to the philosophical drama of Æschylus and the dialogued dreams of Plato."

But let us now pass from details, and let us see what M. Renan has to say about some of the great figures of early Bible history. What does he think about Moses, that man who has become colossal among the grand mythical figures of humanity? The existence of Moses he thinks to have been quite probable. His name appears to be Egyptian. Tradition represents him as a *levite*, and modern criticism and M. Renan are agreed that in all probability the *levites* were Egyptians who followed the Israelites when they left the land of the Pharaohs, and who remained specially concerned with the ritual of public worship. Was Moses really the chief of a revolt and the guide of fugitive Israel? M. Renan is inclined to reject the whole narrative of Exodus as pure fable, and to retain as facts simply the departure of Israel from Egypt, and its entrance into the peninsula of Sinai. The rôle of Moses as a leader and a lawgiver he considers apparently as a glorious legend created long after the settlement of Israel in the land of Canaan.

With the foundation of the royalty we come to an epoch of positive facts, and M. Renan reconstitutes in a most vivid manner the life and reigns of Saul and of David, "the unscrupulous condottier who took his place and became King 'after God's own heart,' the supposed ancestor of Jesus, the King whom the opinion of humanity has crowned with the aureole of every kind of glory. * * * David, a young Bethlehemite, distinguished himself in the campaign against the Philistines. * * * He was brave, bold, clever, and, like all the Benjamites, an excellent slinger. But what was most extraordinary in him were his civil and social qualities. In this Semitic East, ordinarily hard and repulsive, there are born sometimes prodigies of grace, elegance, and intelligence. David was one of these charmers. Capable of the blackest crimes when circumstances demanded, he was also capable of the most delicate sentiments. He knew how to make himself popular. As soon as they knew him people became attached to him. His appearance formed a marked contrast with that of his fellow tribesmen. He was rosy-faced, his features were fine and amiable, his voice sweet, and his speech easy. Very ancient texts present him as a skilful citharist and a practised poet." The story, however, of David playing on the harp before Saul is legendary, and his rôle as a psalmist is still more legendary.

M. Renan traces with great spirit the steps by which David became popular. "There are men," he says, "whom popularity anticipates, almost without their having courted it, men whom public opinion takes by the hand, so to speak, and orders to commit crimes in view of the programme which will be imposed upon them subsequently. Such was Bonaparte; such was David. The criminal, in these cases, is above all the crowd, which plays the part of a veritable Lady Macbeth, who, as soon as she has chosen her victim, intoxicates him with the magic words, 'You shall be King.'" Then he follows David in his career as an outlaw, a highwayman, a brigand chief of a band of brigands, living by pillage and rapine, and even sojourning among the Philistines, the enemies of his own kith and kin. Finally he shows us David King, giving Israel a capital, Jerusalem, which will one day be the capital of the heart of humanity, the magnetic pole of the religious love and the religious poetry of the whole world. Each aggrandizement of Israel was equivalent to an aggrandizement of Iahvé. "Iahvéism, hitherto so little organized, will now," says M. Renan, "have a metropolis and soon a temple. It will take four hundred years to make this metropolis, exclusive of other places of worship; but the place is fixed. Among so many hills that Iahvé might have preferred, the choice of Sion is made. The field of the religious battle is marked out.

"David was the unconcious agent of these grand humanitarian designations. Few natures appear to have been less religious; few adorers of Iahvé had less the sentiment of that which was destined to make the future of Iahvéism, namely, justice. David was Iahvéist, as Mesa, that King of Moab, whose confession we have, was Chemosist. Iahvé was his protecting god, and Iahvé is a god who causes his favorites to succeed. Iahvé, besides, was very useful: he gave precious oracles by the ephod of Abiathar. That was all; David and his followers had no aversion for the name of Baal. What the religion of Iahvé was destined to become in the hands of the great prophets of the eighth century David evidently had no more presentiment than had Gideon, Abimelech, or Jephthah. But he was founder of Jerusalem and the father of a dynasty intimately associated with the work of Israel. This fact marked him as a nucleus for future legends. From century to century we shall notice their transformations. We shall see the brigand of the cave of Adullam and of Ziklag assuming little by little the aspect of a saint. He will be represented as the author of the psalms, the sacred choregue, the type of the future Saviour. Jesus will have to be the son of David! The Evangelical biography will be made to lie in a multitude of points by the idea that the life of the Messiah must reproduce the traits of the life of David. Pious souls, while delighting in the sentiments full of resignation and tender melancholy which are contained in the finest of all liturgical books, will believe that they are in communion with this bandit; humanity will believe in final justice on the testimony of David, who never thought of it, and on the testimony of the Sibyll, who never existed. *Teste David cum Sibylla!* O divine comedy!"

With this shaft of irony M. Renan concludes his first volume of the "History of the People of Israel."

BOOK NOTES.

The Harpers publish in one volume John Anster's metrical translation of the two parts of Goethe's "Faust."

In his "Ingleside Rhaims" (John B. Alden) Mr. J. E. Rankin shows his capacity to write melodious verses in the dialect of Robert Burns.

Cupples & Hurd publish a second series of "Thoughts," by Ivan Panin. They embody original ideas, conveyed in vigorous language.

"Old Homestead Poems" (Harpers) is the title of an illustrated volume of verse by Wallace Bruce, who writes with ease and invariable metrical correctness. His best pieces are of an occasional character, and several of these are spirited in style and patriotic in tone.

Virginia F. Townsend's "Life of Washington" (Worthington Company) differs from ordinary works of its class, in that it dwells much more fully on the moral and intellectual qualities or the personal traits of its subject than on the historical events of his life. The author has written for children, who will find the work unusually attractive.

A very delightful story for children is Ruth Ogden's "His Little Royal Highness" (E. P. Dutton & Co.). The author keenly enters into the thoughts and emotions of young people, and can move them to tears or laughter with equal facility. She writes in an easy, colloquial style, and is fortunate in having had for a coadjutor W. Rainey, whose illustrations are worthy of the text.

"Letters from Colorado," by H. L. Wason (Cupples & Hurd), consists of a series of metrical exercises illustrating life in Colorado, its scenery and legends. The verses have no special merit, though not unmusical in occasional passages, and in his choice of words the author is often infelicitous, if not positively faulty. On the whole, Mr. Wason might have expressed himself better in simple prose.

Homer Greene's "Burnham Breaker" (T. Y. Crowell & Co.), like his "Blind Brother," is a story of the Pennsylvania mining region, abounding in thrilling incidents and well-drawn characters. It hinges upon the efforts of a boy employed in a coal mine near Scranton to discover his parents, from whom he had been separated at a tender age. In unravelling this mystery the author exhibits much constructive skill, and several of the situations are both dramatic and pathetic.

"Madame de Staël," by Bella Duffy, is the most recent addition to Roberts Brothers' "Famous Women" series. It is a well-written biography, giving a graphic account of the era of the first Napoleon, and marked by impartiality, judgment, and critical ability. Though profoundly interested in her subject, Miss Duffy has not attempted to conceal or extenuate the failings of Madame de Staël. She has drawn probably as correct a picture as the materials at her command would permit.

A little volume entitled "Sermons for Children" (Scribners) presents the late Arthur Penrhyn Stanley in what to many readers will seem a novel aspect. It contains fourteen brief discourses of an evangelical type, written by him especially for children, which are models of simplicity in style, and are known to have interested many of those to whom they were addressed. None knew better than the scholarly preacher of Westminster Abbey how to adapt himself to the feelings and comprehension of his hearers.

Cupples & Hurd publish a translation by J. M. Percival of "The last Von Reckenburg," by Louise von Francois, a novel which has met with great success in Germany. The plot is original and ingenious, and the mystery hinted at in the introductory chapter imparts a dramatic coloring to every succeeding page. The author is a keen observer of human nature, and her characters are clearly and firmly outlined—careful studies of a state of society which prevailed in Germany during and after the Napoleonic wars, but which has long passed away. This is a story which one will feel like finishing at a single reading.

Mr. Elbridge S. Brooks's "Story of the American Indian" (D. Lothrop Company) is a compendium, well adapted for popular use, of the history of the North American aborigines, their origin, habits, and relations with the white man since the colonization of the country. The author, like the late Mrs. Helen Jackson (H. H.) in her "Century of Dishonor," is an ardent sympathizer with the Indians, and is inclined to trace the outbreak of every Indian war to the cruelty and injustice of the whites. As a matter of fact that is not strictly true (witness the recent outbreak of the Crows), but the tribes of the Mississippi valley have suffered enough wrongs within the last century to win for them the commiseration of philanthropists. The numerous and excellent illustrations usefully supplement the text.

David McKay of Philadelphia has undertaken the republication of the novels of Charles Brockden Brown, the earliest of American novelists and the first of our countrymen to make literature a profession. The first volume, containing "Wieland, or the Transformation," originally published in 1798, and a memoir of the author, is produced in a style to delight the heart of the book collector; in binding, paper, and typography it is a model of elegance. Mr. McKay's enterprise is in every respect worthy of commendation. Brown was not only a writer of good Johnsonian English, of the school of William Godwin, but a man of genius. In his depth of insight into the morbid phenomena of the human, he really, according to Whipple, anticipated Hawthorne; and Dowden, in his life of Shelley, records that four of Brown's novels, together with Schiller's "Robbers" and Goethe's "Faust," were—of all the works with which he was familiar—those which took the deepest root in the poet's mind, and had the strongest influence in the formation of his character. And yet probably not one person in a thousand, who is not familiar with American literary history, ever heard that such a writer existed. But as no edition of his novels has appeared for forty years or more, this may not appear so surprising after all. Mr. McKay's enterprise will be limited to 500 sets of six volumes each.

Mr. F. Marion Crawford's latest novel, "Marzio's Crucifix" (Macmillan & Co.), is one of the simplest in construction and strongest that he has produced. The scene is laid in Rome of the present day, the *dramatis personæ* do not exceed five or six in number, and two or three days will cover the action of the story. As a study of