SOME NEW BOOKS.

The United States in the Last Quarter of a Century.

It was an extremely useful, but very difficult undertaking, the outcome of which is embodied in two large octavo volumes collectively entitled *The History of the Last Quarter Century in the United States*, 1870-1895, by E. BENJAMIN ANDREWS (Scribners). These volumes are based upon a series of papers published in *Scribner's Magazine*, but, while the original matter has been revised and, to a large extent, rewritten extensive additions have been made so as to form a consecutive narrative. The author, of course, does not profess to offer an exhaustive history of the United States since 1870, or to do more than make provisional comments on the more important events which are recorded. He is aware that, with regard to the purport of some of these events, committees of Congress have made contradictory reports. Fully to explain the acts of public men and the policies of administration falling within the period covered by these volumes, we shall need the light to be ultimately cast by State and private papers which, as yet, are unsealed. The utmost that can be asked of the author of such a compilation is that he shall evince discretion and freedom from prejudice. The exhibition of such qualities may be conceded for the most part in this instance, but, of course, an author must needs write from his own point of view, and it is not to be expected that his conclusions will commend themselves to all of his readers. In some cases, to be mentioned presently, they do not commend themselves to us. Considered merely as a repertory of facts, recorded nowhere else except in the files of newspapers, the book before us will be found of great value for purposes of reference; there is no substitute for it at present, and many years are likely to elapse before one is forthcoming.

I.

Of the thirteen chapters composing the first volume, we turn first to the chapter which deals with the Credit Mobilier exposure. It will be remembered that in July, 1862, Congress created the Union Pacific Railway Company to build a railroad from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean, fixing at $1,000,000,000 the amount of its stock, lending it a vast sum in Government bonds, endowing it with an enormous amount of land along the route, and allowing it till 1876 to complete the road. The shares could be sold but slowly, however, and it was soon made clear that, unless Congress should offer still more tempting terms, the project would not be carried out. Accordingly, a more liberal act was passed, but even this did not put the road in a way to completion. Contractors hesitated to undertake the building of such a line, or any part of it, and but eleven miles were constructed up to September, 1865. The general impression was either that the road could not be built, or that it would never pay. In March, 1865, however, the Credit Mobilier of America, a company organized in 1859 by the Pennsylvania Legislature as the Pennsylvania Fiscal Agency, and in its new form soon amply equipped with capital, contracted with the Union Pacific to go forward with the construction. Two hundred and forty-seven miles of road were built, carrying the line to the 100th meridian. Then arose trouble within the Credit Mobilier Company. T. C. Durant, President of this and Vice-President of the Union Pacific Company, wished the Mobilier to realize at once all possible profit out of the construction, while his opponents, New England citizens, believing that the road was to eventually pay, were inclined to deal honestly with it, expecting their profits as corporators in the Mobilier to come from the appreciation of the Union Pacific stock, in which, to a great extent, the contractors were paid for their work. This party sought to eject Durant from the Mobilier management, and at length did so, but his power in the railway corporation was sufficient to prevent the Mobilier, as such, from getting a further contract. After much contention, during which the Mobilier was on the verge of failing, Durant consented that Oakes Ames might take a contract to push the construction of the road. Mr. Ames was, at the time, a Mobilier stockholder and a representative in Congress from Massachusetts. Ames's contract was dated Aug. 16, 1867, but, on the 15th of the next October, he made it over to seven trustees, who took Ames's place as contractors. They did all the things which he had agreed to do, and were remunerated just as he was to be. The trustees bound themselves to pay over all the profits of their contract to the Mobilier stockholders in the proportions in which these severally held stock at the date of the contract. This arrangement was fully carried out, and the road was finished under it. Mr. Andrews describes it as "an adroit way of circumventing Durant and enabling the Mobilier to build the road in spite of him." During 1867 and 1868, Ames sold shares of Credit Mobilier stock to many members of Congress. He gave away none, but in a number of cases payment was considerably subsequent to the sale. Though then worth much more, every share was sold for par and interest, just what it cost Ames himself. Mr. Andrews does not say, but we say, that every sale made under such circumstances to Congressmen was intended and understood to be a bribe.

Col. H. S. McComb of Delaware, in virtue of a subscription that he said he had made for a friend, claimed of Ames $25,000 in Mobilier stock, which he alleged had never been received. Letters passed back and forth between McComb and Ames, in one of which, the latter, a plain, outspoken man, declared that he had placed the stock with influential gentlemen (naming several Congressmen) "where it would do the most good." Press and public eagerly caught up this phrase. Soon it was in every mouth, and everywhere was placed upon it the worst construction which the words could bear. McComb pressed his suit, and, at last, the letters were published. THE NEW YORK SUN of Sept. 4, 1872, in the very heat of the Greeley campaign, came out with the heading "The King of Frauds; How the Credit Mobilier Bought Its Way Through Congress;" stating that Ames had distributed in bribes thirty thousand shares of the stock, worth nine millions of dollars. The scandal ran through the country like wildfire, the allegations being very generally believed. Mr. Andrews goes on to assert that the allegations comprised partly gross fabrications and partly gross exaggerations. To our surprise, he seems to think that the bribery was excusable because "Mr. Ames's motive was laudable—the completion of a great national work, which has long since paid the country many times its cost. He knew that the Pacific Railway had many bitter enemies in Congress and outside of it, most of them not public spirited, but the blackmailer servants of Durant, who stood ready, if opportunity offered, to work its ruin. He [Ames] wished to be fortified. His methods certainly carried him to the verge of propriety, and perhaps beyond; but, everything considered, the evidence shows little ground for the peculiar execration visited upon him." It is a fact, and Mr. Andrews feels bound to record it, that the Poland committee of the House, reporting on Feb. 18, 1873, declared that Ames had acted with "intent to influence the votes of members." Mr. Andrews tries to extenuate the fact by adding that, "in the sense that he sought to interest men in the enterprise, and to prevent them from sacrificing it to apathy or spite, this was probably true. That it was true in any other sense is, at least, not proved." Surely Mr. Andrews ought to recognize the grave impropriety of Congressmen accepting a stock when legislation affecting its value was liable at any moment to come before them. The plea made by Oakes himself that he should not be made a scapegoat was certainly pathetic, but it was essentially unsound; for, as between the tempted and the tempter, the latter is more worthy of punishment. "These, then, are my offences," said Ames in his defence, "that I have risked reputation, fortune, everything, in an enterprise of incalculable moment to the Government, from which the capital of the world shrank; that I have sought to strengthen the work thus rashly undertaken, by invoking the charitable judgment of the public upon obstacles and embarrassments; that I have had friends, some of them in official life, with whom I have been willing to share advantageous opportunities for investment; that I have kept to the truth, through good and evil report, denying nothing, concealing nothing, reserving nothing. Who will say that I alone am to be offered up a sacrifice, to appease a public clamor, or expiate the sins of others. Not until such an offering is made will I believe it possible. But if this body shall so order, that it can best be purified by the choice of a single victim, I shall accept its mandate, appealing with unfaltering confidence to the impartial verdict of history for that vindication which it is proposed to deny me here." The appeal was made in vain. The committee recommended his expulsion, and the House proceeded to censure Ames; it would probably have expelled him, had not the alleged offence been committed in a previous Congress. Soon after suffering this censure, which aggravated a disease already fastened upon him, Mr. Ames went home to die. One is always sorry for a scapegoat, but we cannot accept Mr. Andrews's judgment that the charges made in Congress against Oakes Ames had, in no wise, the weight attached to them. The only thing to be regretted in the Credit Mobilier business was the failure of the House to censure or expel not only Ames himself, but every member who could be proved to have accepted a bribe.

II.

Mr. Andrews gives but an imperfect account of the famous "Mulligan letters," all of which Mr. Blaine professed to read in the House of Representatives. He suppresses the significant phrase "Burn this letter," and, of the substance of the documents, recalls only what might be construed as favorable to Blaine. We shall not dwell, however, on this matter, but pass directly to the chapter which deals with the Tilden-Hayes imbroglio. As to the outcome of the election, Mr. Andrews candidly reports that the "Hon. Hugh McCulloch, a Republican, but eminently free from partisan bias, was of the opinion at the time, and so long as he lived, that if the distinguished Northern men who visited the disputed States had stayed at home, and there had been no outside pressure upon the returning boards, their certificates would have been in favor of the Democratic election." This is unquestionably true of Louisiana and Florida, if not of South Carolina. Mr. Andrews continues: "This opinion was confirmed by a remark of the President of the Western Union Telegraph Company at the annual meeting of the Union League Club of New York in 1878. In a conversation with that gentleman, Mr. McCulloch happened to speak of the election of Mr. Hayes, when the former interrupted by saying, 'But he was not elected.' 'If he was not, the emanations of your office failed to show it,' McCulloch replied. 'Oh, yes,' was the rejoinder, 'but that was because the examiners did not know where to look.' 'Mr. Tilden,' said a prominent Republican, 'was, I suppose, legally elected, but not fairly.' This was doubtless the conclusion of a great many other Republicans, as well as of practically all the Democrats." For the judgment rendered by the Electoral Commission, that Mr. Hayes had been elected President, Mr. Andrews thinks that "Mr. Justice Bradley was made to bear wholly unmerited censure. The fault lay not in him, but elsewhere." On the contrary, the fault lay mainly in him. It was his vote which caused the Commission, after refusing to go behind the returns in the case of Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina, to insist upon going behind them in the case of Oregon. It is true that, next to Bradley, Congress was the greatest sinner, in that it had failed to pass a law to forestall the difficulty of rival electors. In a succeeding chapter Mr. Andrews has much to say about the personal honesty of Hayes. How does he reconcile this alleged honesty with his bestowal of Federal offices upon the ringleaders in the concoction of fraudulent returns from Louisiana?

In his account of the Garfield-Hancock campaign, the author recalls the disgraceful incident that occurred at a dinner given in New York in honor of S. W. Dorsey. The Vice-President-elect, Mr. Arthur, in a vein of pleasantry, remarked that the Republicans had been victorious in Indiana by a liberal use of "soap." But why, one may ask, should Mr. Andrews not show himself equally candid in the case of Mr. Garfield? Why, when devoting a page to Garfield's "highly honorable record," should he overlook the subject's implication in the Credit Mobilier scandal? Not only did Garfield accept a bribe from Oakes Ames, but he lied about it. The facts are set forth in the report of the Poland committee, a committee the majority of which was composed of Garfield's fellow Republicans. Mr. Andrews should remember that he is trying to write history, and should tell the truth, no matter whom it hurts. The Credit Mobilier affair and Garfield's connection with it no more constitute a petty negligible incident than does the "soap" story.

A New History of the Middle Ages.

It is a serviceable text book which Messrs. O. J. THATCHER and F. SCHWILL have given us in *Europe in the Middle Ages* (Scribners). The authors have been engaged for some years in teaching general European history at the University of Chicago, and the present book had its origin in the needs of class-room work. Of the books already current which cover the same ground, most address themselves either to students of high schools or to specialists, and, therefore, are unsuited for use in college classes by virtue either of their summary treatment or their minute expansiveness. The period which ostensibly forms the subject of the present work extends from 500 to 1500 A. D., but, in the preliminary chapters, the authors really find a starting point in 250 A. D., when the Germanic peoples began to press upon the Roman Empire. The value of such a treatise may be tested by marking what the authors have to say regarding a certain number of especially important questions, among which may be mentioned the continuity of the Roman Empire up to 800 A. D., the effect of the coronation of Charles the Great as Emperor of the West, the growth of feudalism, monasticism, the Papacy and Mohammedanism, the development of the cities, the achievements of the Normans in Italy, the relation of the house of Anjou to Italy and to Hungary, the degree of civilization attained in the middle ages, and, finally, the Italian Renaissance.

I.

Let us glance, first, at the preliminary chapter on the remarkable reaction of the Roman Empire against the Germans in the middle of the sixth century. The whole of northern Africa, the whole of Italy, a part of Spain, and the whole of Illyria were recovered by the Romans, whose centre of government, of course, was now Constantinople. There can be no doubt that Justinian thoroughly hated the Germans, and that it was a part of his well-defined plan to reduce or destroy them all. Not content with destroying the Teutonic peoples, which had already settled on Roman soil, Justinian intrigued with the tribes that were still north of the Danube, and fomented their quarrels. For years, he kept the Lombards and Gepidæ fighting with one another, in the hope that, in the end, they would mutually destroy each other and thus free him from two dangerous tribes that were likely at any moment to invade his territory. At any rate, so long as they were warring with each other, he felt that he was safe from their attacks. Justinian's policy was destined to fail. He was unable to carry it to a triumphant issue because of the wars which he was compelled to wage with the Persians, the Slavs, the Avars, and the Bulgarians. Justinian's wars with Persia have but little interest for us in themselves. They are important, however, because they hindered him from carrying out his anti-German policy. But for these wars with the Persians and with barbarians in the East, he certainly would have been able to give much more attention to the West, and it is probable that he would have greatly weakened, if not entirely destroyed, the Franks, as he did the Vandals and the Ostrogoths. His best Generals and troops had to be recalled from Italy and sent to Persia at a time when he needed their help in the West in order to destroy the German kingdoms, and restore the empire to its former boundaries and greatness. It was in his time that the Slavs made their entrance into history. In 547 they reached Dyrrachium, on the west coast of Illyria. In 549 they overran many provinces, and even threatened Constantinople. Almost every year they made themselves felt by invading some part of the Roman territory. From this time onward the empire was never free from them. Their invasions continued until, finally, they settled in the tract now represented by the many Slavic provinces in southern Austria and the northern part of the Balkan peninsula. In the following centuries they moved south in great numbers. Greece became very largely Slavic; the Peloponnesus was called Slavonia. Their migration cost Justinian a great deal of trouble, and prevented him from carrying on his conquests in other parts of the empire. The Bulgarians were originally a Ural-Altaic people, but when they came into Europe they settled among some Slavic populations and were absorbed by them. Nothing was left to them but their name, which came to be applied to the Slavs, among whom they settled. Year after year this mixed people invaded the empire and devastated many of its fairest districts. Perhaps their most formidable incursion took place in 539. In that year they ravaged the Balkan peninsula as far south as the Gulf of Corinth, taking and sacking many cities. In 558 the Avars, who are now definitely identified with the Cotrigur-Huns, entered the empire from the east. After doing much damage they finally settled on the middle Danube, and established the kingdom of the Avars, which two and a half centuries later was destroyed by Charles the Great. Luckily for the Germanic element in the empire, it was strengthened at the very time of Justinian's opposition by the formation of the great tribe of Bavarians, the settlement of the Lombards in Italy, and the phenomenal growth of the Franks. The Bavarians first appear as a strong, vigorous, and warlike people, occupying the territory which still bears their name, and from which they were never afterward removed.

II.

The significance of the coronation of Charles the Great as Roman Emperor in the West is distinctly indicated in the book before us. In those parts of the empire which had been occupied by the barbarians the memory of the empire had almost died out, although a certain deference was still occasionally paid by practically independent States to the Emperor at Constantinople, who was recognized as the sole legal representative of the Roman dominion. In the West, which had been Christianized largely by the efforts of the Bishop of Rome, this dignitary became a kind of centre and his authority a bond of union. While the Church thus formed a sort of spiritual realm, she herself did not forget the existence of the Roman empire, whose seat was now at Constantinople. Among churchmen, that is to say, among all educated men, the idea that the empire must stand so long as the world should exist had not died out. The Bishops of Rome therefore regarded the Emperor at Constantinople as their legitimate head and were subject to him. In return, however, for their obedience they received only insults and violence. The Emperor was never able to protect them and was often, according to their judgment, too officious in ecclesiastical matters. It was natural, therefore, that the Bishops of Rome should at last think of revolting from the Emperor at Constantinople and of seeking an Emperor in the West. This revolt came to a head when, in Rome, on Christmas Day, 800, the Pope placed the imperial crown on the head of Charles, King of the Franks, and all the people present shouted and hailed him Emperor. Apart from the general drift of things, there were several specific reasons for this act on the part of the Pope. While the Church had been neglected by the Emperors at Constantinople, Charles had been most energetic in her service, and was, in fact, discharging the function supposed to be peculiarly imperial. The West was shocked, too, because, for the first time in the history of the Roman Empire, the throne was occupied by a woman. It seemed to the people of that age that such a position should be filled only by a man, and they were unwilling to acknowledge a woman as Empress. Not only was the sovereign a woman, but the women had been guilty of inhuman cruelty. Irene had deposed, imprisoned, and blinded her own son, Constantine VI. It was felt that such a criminal as this must not occupy the high position of protector of the Church. There was also heresy in the East. During the eighth century there had been a great struggle there about the worship of images. The court and the learned generally opposed their use, while the monks and common people had refused to be deprived of them. It was deemed a shame that the orthodox West should be subjected to the East, thus defiled with heresy. There was also a feeling in Rome at this time that Constantinople was an upstart city. Rome had always claimed the right to elect the Emperor, and to figure as the capital of the world; but these dignities had been usurped by Constantinople. The time had now come, it was thought, for Rome to reassert her rights, and again become the head of the universe. She could do this by rejecting the ruler on the Bosporus and electing an Emperor in the West. According to Eginhard, Charles's biographer, Charles did not know that the Pope was intending to crown him, but was taken wholly by surprise. We are told furthermore, on the same authority, that if he had known the Pope's intention he would not have gone into the church that day. Three reasons are suggested in this book for Charles's dissatisfaction. In the first place it cut across his plans and interrupted his negotiations with the court at Constantinople; again, he may have been displeased that the coronation should have taken place without sufficient preparation and ceremony; then, too, probably, he was angry that he had been crowned by the Pope, instead of being permitted to crown himself. Charles knew, moreover, that he was not legally Emperor; that his coronation had been an act of rebellion against the legitimate sovereign. There was but one thing that could make him a legal Emperor, and that was the acquiescence of the Emperor in the East. This he determined to secure at any price. He did not resent the many insults offered him by the Eastern Emperor, but preserved a conciliatory attitude, and was, at last, successful (in 812) in obtaining the recognition which he so earnestly desired. In that year he was greeted as "Imperator" and "Basileus" by the ambassadors of the Eastern court. The defect in his title was thereby removed, and Charles seems not to have troubled himself any further about the Eastern Emperor. He evidently thought, however, that he was himself Emperor in the West only. He never disputed the existence or the legality of the Emperor in the East. He did not regard his coronation as the deposition of Irene, but, on the contrary, continued to have diplomatic relations with Constantinople. Of what had occurred in A. D. 800 the people of Rome took a different view. To them it was, and was meant to be, a revolt. They believed that they had deposed the Eastern line and restored the supremacy of the West. In their lists of Emperors the name of Charles the Great follows directly after that of Constantine VI.

This restoration of the empire in the West was a momentous event, because of the vast influence it had upon the later history of Europe. It bound Italy and Germany together in a union which, while it had its compensations, was, on the whole, ruinous to both, at least politically. In consequence of Charles's coronation the German Emperors were unable, for 700 years, to free themselves from the idea that they must rule Italy. They were, therefore, continually wasting their strength in useless campaigns in the Italian peninsula, instead of extending Germany to the east, the only direction in which there was a possibility of success. The Emperors were themselves out in Italy, but were never able to unite Germany. The best days of the best German sovereigns were spent on Italian soil. The political unification of Germany was thereby made impossible until our times.

III.

In a chapter on feudalism, the latest conclusions on a difficult subject are set forth briefly and clearly. To comprehend feudal society we should not fix our eyes too exclusively on the feudal lord and his rights and duties, but consider carefully the situation of the other two classes, namely, the peasants or tillers of the soil, and the citizens or inhabitants of the towns. The land was ordinarily divided into large estates or domains, in the hands of what may be called great landlords, who, of course, did no work themselves. Very often they did not even oversee their estates, but left that work to the care of a foreman or agent. This office of agent often became a fief, but sometimes it was farmed out for a certain sum. The holder of it received no salary, but was expected to get his pay out of the administration of the office itself. This he did at the expense of the peasants. The central house, or manor of the estate, was regarded as the residence of the lord, although it frequently happened that he spent little time in it, especially if he possessed several domains. Often the manor would be the residence of the agent. About the manor was usually a considerable amount of land, which was held immediately by the lord and cultivated for his benefit. Since all his tenants owed him a certain number of days' labor, he never experienced any difficulty in having this land well cultivated. All the rest of the tillable land and meadow was divided into small lots. These were parcelled out among the tenants, and became hereditary in the families of those who tilled them. The tenants lived generally in little houses grouped together, forming a village. All the inhabitants of the country were known as peasants (rustici, villeins), and may be divided into two classes, serf and free, though, within these two divisions, there were many variations. A separate chapter is devoted to a description of the class of citizens, but we need only note that most of the cities arose after the establishment of feudalism; they were straightway forced into the feudal relation. They were, in fact, regarded as feudal personalities or entities, and received much the same treatment as would a feudal individual. The city, as a whole, owed feudal duties, and might have such duties owed to it. As the municipalities grew large and rich they resisted the feudal claims of their lords, and were one of the powers that destroyed feudalism. The feudal system may be said to have reached its heighth from the tenth to the thirteenth century, and then to have gradually declined. The invention of gunpowder revolutionized the methods of warfare, giving to infantry an ascendancy over cavalry. Against firearms the knight's armor and his castle were equally useless. The close of the middle ages is marked by the rapid growth of the power of the Kings, who succeeded in gathering all the elements of authority into their own hands. Gradually feudal tenures were changed into allodial tenures. Various forces were at work to decrease the number of serfs and villeins, such as the Crusades, the great pests and the incessant wars. The feudal lords were eventually left without a sufficient number of tenants to do their work. The demand for workmen created new sources of supply, and we find, at once, a growing number of free laborers, who worked for wages, without any feudal ties. The fifteenth century saw the breaking up of feudalism, although in France and elsewhere certain fragments remained till the French Revolution, and the social organization of Europe is still largely feudal in its fundamental ideas.

IV.

Of monasticism there is a succinct account in sixteen pages, while eighty-five pages are allotted to the pivotal subject of the growth of the Papacy and the relations of that institution to the empire. Both the dark and the bright sides of monasticism are distinctly brought out. There were many periods of decadence in the history of the institution. The piety of the monks gave them popularity and wealth; wealth, in its turn, gave leisure, and led to idleness and profligacy. The principles of monasticism were opposed to the dignity of the family and to the proper position of woman in society. Again, the best human talent was frequently drawn into the monastery, and hence lost to the State. Much more, indeed, might be said against the institution, but the good which it did far outweighed the evils. Monasticism furnished the missionaries to Christianize western and northern Europe. The monks were also civilizers. Every monastery founded by them became a centre of humane life and learning, and hence a source of illumination to the surrounding country. They cleared the lands and brought them under cultivation. They were skilled farmers and taught, by their example, the dignity of labor, in an age when the soldier was the world's hero. They preserved much of the civilization of Rome, and transmitted it to the barbarians. They were the teachers of the West. Literature and learning found a refuge with them in times of violence. Their monasteries were the hotels of the middle age, and they cared for the poor and the sick. They were the greatest builders of mediæval times, and many of the great churches of Europe were built by them. We owe them, in fine, an immense debt of gratitude.

Of the long struggle between the Popes and the Emperors we need only remark that it resulted in the political dismemberment of both Germany and Italy. While the great feudal lords of Germany were gaining autonomy there, the cities of northern Italy were acquiring independence, and the French, under the House of Anjou gained a firm foothold in the southern part of the peninsula. The Papacy still retained its lands in the central part, at the end of the middle ages, but, considered as a spiritual institution, Papacy had begun to lose ground. It was becoming gradually divested of the religious character it had possessed in the days of Gregory the Great, and was now coming to be regarded more as a great political factor. It had placed temporal power above its religious interests, and, therefore, the final assurance of its victory over the empire was the beginning of its decline.

V.

To Mohammed, Mohammedanism, and the Crusades, the authors of the book before us assign about a hundred pages, but the subject could not be adequately treated in a smaller space. The direct and indirect effects of the Crusades on Europe are well summed up. They undoubtedly did much to increase the power of the Papacy, especially during the first hundred years. Urban II. was virtually at the head of Christian Europe, and his leadership of a most popular movement confirmed him in his high place in the mind of the Christian world. Chivalry was, perhaps, an inevitable outgrowth of the feudal system, but the Crusades forced it to become organized, and made of it the institution which it became. The military-monkish orders owed their existence entirely to the Crusades. The conquests of the order of Teutonic Knights among the heathen along the Baltic may be regarded as one of the most important of their indirect effects. It is also certain that the Crusades helped to demolish feudalism. The barons often sold their rights, privileges, lands, and other feudal possessions, in order to get money to go on a crusade. The creation of a new nobility to replace the old was thereby hastened. Again, as we have said, the Crusades diminished the number of the feudal subjects of the lowest class, and so created the demand for workmen, which resulted in the elevation of the serfs into a class of free day-laborers. They also had some effect on the process by which the Kings were increasing their power, at the expense of the nobles. Since, moreover, they brought together large numbers of people of all countries, they developed the consciousness of national differences. Each nation came to dislike all the others—one of the necessary steps, apparently, in the development of nationality. On commerce the influence of the Crusades was marked. They gave a great impetus to shipbuilding, since the carrying of pilgrims between Europe and Asia became a lucrative occupation, and the amount of trade was greatly increased. Many new objects of merchandise were now introduced for the first time into Europe. The Crusades created and supplied a large demand in the West for wines, sugar, cotton, silk, all kinds of textile fabrics, rugs, pottery, glassware, spices, medicines, perfumes, coloring substances, incense, various kinds of oil, mastic, dates, grains, and many other things. It would not be too much to say that the Crusades made Europe rich. The cities, especially, profited by the expansion of commerce; the rise of the citizen, or middle class, was greatly expedited. The literature and learning of Europe were also profoundly affected. The Crusades gave a strong impulse to literary activity. Many chronicles, histories, and poems were written about them, and the legends which grew out of them were innumerable. The literature of chivalry may be traced, indirectly, to the same impulse. The great cycles of legends about Solomon, Troy, and Alexander the Great arose under the same influence. In 1141 the Koran was translated into Latin. About the same time a school was established in Paris to teach the Eastern languages, such as Arabic and Armenian. Europe's fund of information, also, was materially increased. As regards zoölogy, the Crusaders became acquainted with many animals which aroused their curiosity. The interest thus awakened resulted in the formation of zoölogical gardens, first of all, in Sicily and Italy, in which strange animals were collected, not simply to gratify curiosity, but also to satisfy a thirst for scientific knowledge. Moreover, some new domestic animals were introduced into Europe, such as the mule, the donkey, and the Arab horse. In botany and practical farming Europe had much to learn from the Arabs. They taught the best methods of irrigation. The "Dutch" windmill is an Arabic invention, and was used for grinding corn and drawing water in the East. It was imported into Europe by the Crusaders. Many new plants and trees were brought to the West, and experiments made in their cultivation. Among them were not only sugar and cotton, already mentioned, but also rice, indigo, sesame, and saffron; the mulberry tree, the pistachio tree, the fig, citron, pomegranate, watermelon, muskmelon, apricot, plum, and artichoke. In medicine and chemistry, which, among the Arabs were closely related, the Christians learned of divers syrups, juleps, and elixirs; of camphor, senna, rhubarb, and many similar ingredients. Many chemical terms, such as alembic, alcohol, alkali, borax, and amalgam are Arabic in origin. The advances made by the Arabs in mathematics and astronomy are too well known to need more than an allusion. The long-continued intercourse between the Christians and the Mohammedans facilitated the spread to the West of the Arabic achievements in these directions. Many astronomical terms, such as zenith, nadir, azimuth, and almanac, were derived from the Arabic.

VI.

Most important of all was the general enlargement of the intellectual horizon of Europe, caused by the travels of Western Christians in foreign lands which had a different, higher, and finer civilization than their own. Life in the West was still very rude. The houses lacked all luxuries and comforts, and most of those things which are now regarded as necessities. The Western European, whose experiences had been very limited indeed, entered into a new world when he set out on a crusade. He found new climates, new natural products, strange costumes, houses, and customs. The features of the land-scape, and even the skies above him, were different. In the dwellings he found many new objects of convenience, embellishment, and refinement, such as baths, divans, sofas, alcoves, mattresses, caraffes, baldaquins, jars, and precious stones. The words talisman, amulet, carat, and the names of many stones are Arabic. The geographical knowledge of the West had been very circumscribed, but the Crusades gave experience in travel and a practical knowledge of large territory. Great interest was aroused in the study of geography. A tolerably thorough acquaintance with the Mediterranean and of large parts of Asia and of Africa was acquired. The curiosity awakened by new regions, supplemented with mercenary and commercial incentives, led Europeans to undertake long journeys of discovery. Travellers of this kind, only a little less famous than Marco Polo, were Plan Carpin and Andrew of Longjumeau. The accounts of their journeys which they published were very widely read, and, while conveying information, increased the interest of Europe in foreign lands. The influence of the Crusades in this direction can hardly be overestimated. Without them the Renaissance could not have been what it was.

In a chapter on the Italian Renaissance, the authors of this book correct some misconceptions which are still current to a certain extent. We still occasionally hear the Renaissance described as the first gleam of light which shot across Europe in the thousand years succeeding the deposition (in 476) of Augustulus, the last Roman Emperor of the West before the appearance of Charlemagne. Nothing is more erroneous. The middle age had, as the authors are at pains to show, in a chapter devoted to the purpose, a high civilization of its own. The civilization, however, was clerical and feudal, and, from principle, severely limited. The Renaissance, on the other hand, was secular, and freely and ambitiously expansive, like antiquity. It succeeded, in the order of time, but it did not try to uproot the world of mediæval thought, and, like all legitimate historical agencies, it ended in adopting and assimilating the better possessions of its predecessors. The Renaissance gave back to the world the classicism which had been lost, but it did not cast off mediæval Christianity, and, therefore, rested, as modern civilization down to our own day rests, upon the fusion and reciprocal modification of these two congeries of ideas.

Skepticism Exemplified in Five Great Dramas.

It is a remarkable book for which we are indebted to the late JOHN OWEN, which the Messrs. Putnam have published under the title, *The Five Great Skeptical Dramas of History*. Four of these are, of course, the masterwork of the greatest of Greek dramatists, the "Prometheus Bound" of Æschylus; the noblest of Old Testament books possessing a dramatic plot and character, that is to say, the Book of Job; the "Hamlet" of Shakespeare, and the "Faust" of Goethe; to which is added the treatment of the Faust problem by Calderon from a Roman Catholic point of view in "El Magico Prodigioso." No dramas have attracted so much of the world's attention as these five, nor have any others manifested so adequately the intellectual and spiritual idiosyncrasies of their writers. In grouping and considering them together, Mr. Owen's aim was to show that the problems and difficulties with which men have coped through all time are essentially similar; Prometheus, in opposition to the Olympian deities; the patriarch Job, in antagonism to the Hebrew Jahve; Faust and the Wonder-Working Magician, contending with the Deity of the modern world, and with the laws by which He rules it; these four are all vindicators of the selfsame issue, protagonists in the selfsame battle. They occupy the same standpoint of inherent justice and of automatic mental independence, of self-determining reason and conscience; they begin from the same starting point; they employ largely the same arguments; they arrive mostly at the same conclusions. The author concedes, however, that a word of exception may be thought needful for Hamlet, here classified as one of the five skeptical thinkers. In harmony with the bent of a nationality which is far more practical than speculative, his doubt is largely concerned with action. In point of fact, he combines speculative with practical doubt, but it is in the direction of action that he seeks and finds his actual conclusions. The problem Hamlet aims to solve is rather doubt in action than doubt in speculation, but even here the reasons he appeals to are not unlike those of speculative doubters, and, so far, much of his reasoning illustrates and is illustrated by the arguments of other skeptical free thinkers.

I.

About a fourth of the volume is allotted to Æschylus's great drama. By the double method of analysis and comparison the author endeavors to explain the marvellous fascination which the Prometheus myth has exercised age after age upon the strongest intellects. He shows that it appeals directly to all that is heroic, magnanimous, and disinterested in man's highest nature. Whenever human giants have been crushed by some overmastering and unscrupulous tyranny and have demanded some principle of resistance to it; whenever they have striven for further knowledge and enlightenment and have determined, at whatever risk, to attain it; whenever the champions of mankind have felt their energies thwarted, and their aspirations circumscribed by the iron fetters of fate or circumstance; whenever ethical qualities, justice, unselfishness, generosity, have proved themselves superior to mere force and authority, whether supposedly divine or human; whenever leaders of men have had to contend with neglect, with solitude and friendlessness, with abuse and persecution; then the image of the suffering Titan and his indomitable spirit have exercised a potent sway. Whatever may have been the nature and extent of the worship which some writers suppose to have been offered at his shrine in the Academy at Athens, the character of Prometheus has undoubtedly been enshrined in many a human heart and has obtained from congenial spirits a full measure of fealty and reverence. With the single exception of a crucified Jesus, no example of suffering goodness has taken so profound a hold on the imaginations and affections of mankind.

The extent of this power is instructively shown by its diversified character. Not only has the Promethean fire kindled the intellects and quickened the imaginations of all the most eminent thinkers in the world's history, but it has disseminated its influence in the multiform, irradiatory manner in which all great conceptions exercise their power. Mr. Owen exhibits the nature and amount of this diversity by a list of the more illustrious among those who have been attracted by the story and have recognized its profound significance. Prometheus has exercised, for example, a prepotent sway on Hesiod, Æschylus, Socrates, Plato, Lucian, Cicero, Plotinus, some of the later Christian Fathers, upon Abelard, Giordano Bruno, Campanella, Bacon, Vico, Calderon, Jean Paul, Herder, Goethe, Fichte, Heine, Leopardi, Shelley, Byron, and Coleridge. Nor of less import are the varied modes in which the narrative has been reconstructed, and informed with new meanings, by these and other variously minded thinkers. While idealists such as Plato and Plotinus in ancient, and Coleridge in modern times, have discovered in it the germ of an abstruse and elaborate system of transcendentalism, cynics and misanthropists, like Lucian and Leopardi, have, in the spirit of Mephistopheles, thrown ridicule on the Promethean gift of reason to mankind. Shelley interpreted the myth in a mystico-naturalistic sense, characteristic of his genius, but also significant of the wide-ranging capacity of the theme. Byron seized especially upon those features of Prometheus which represent the Titan as contending with invincible destiny. Campanella, Bacon, Jean Paul, Herder, Goethe, and Fichte agree in laying stress on the Æschylian notion that Prometheus enlightens mankind against the volition of the powers that be; while Giordano Bruno and Heine made the suffering Prometheus a symbol of downtrodden humanity in its perennial struggle with tyranny, whether human or superhuman. Such are some of the many renderings which the "Prometheus Bound" has received, a few of the vestments in which the Titan has been endued by the intellects and fancies of various interpreters.

II.

In summing up the outcome of a study of the Book of Job, Mr. Owen holds that no attentive reader can rise from its perusal without a new sense of revelation, not at all unlike the consciousness of new knowledge which a pious but thoughtful and candid Greek would have derived from witnessing a representation of "Prometheus" on the stage, and from contrasting its lessons with the old mythological lore in which he had been indoctrinated. In the author's opinion, a Hebrew student or a modern student of the Book of Job can hardly fail to be struck with Job's sublime belief in absolute justice as a sovereign power in the universe, however much its due manifestation might be impeded from different causes; or with the fact that it was precisely this which formed the basis of Job's invincible trust in Jahve, or rather in the goodness and justice which Jahve personified to his spiritual consciousness. Nor can such a student fail to notice the subjective side of the preceding considerations, to wit, Job's unassailable conviction of his own integrity, and, therefore, the virtual infallibility which he assigns to the human consciousness. We should observe, too, as the outcome of these two principles, the distinct sanction of honest doubt, free inquiry, and free speech, which is presented by the words of Job, and, thereby, the justifiability of all questioning and research based on the pure love of truth, especially if attended by unselfishness, intellectual candor, and religious reverence. Recognized, also, by any thoughtful student would be the greatly enlarged scope assigned, both in Jove's speeches and Jahve's discourse, to ancient Hebrew notions on the subject of God and his government of the world; nor can any one fail to perceive the effects of these broader conceptions in enlarging man's own views both of himself and of his true place in the universe. In short, to a candid and intellectual Hebrew, the study of the book might not inaptly be defined as a liberal education, especially if he had been nurtured on theocratic notions and on ideas of national exclusiveness. But such a reader would be ultimately brought, as Prometheus, Job, Faust, and all other genuine inquirers have been brought, to a conviction of the drawbacks of human search after truth, drawbacks proceeding from the unbounded scope of knowledge, as well as from the limited powers of man. He would learn from Job the common lesson of all the skeptical dramas, that speculative truth is for man an impossibility, and that man must learn to be satisfied with the narrower but sufficing range of practical and ethical duty.

III.

After undertaking, in upward of a hundred pages, a detailed analysis of Goethe's greatest work, Mr. Owen proceeds to adjudge its position among the five great knowledge dramas of the world. He finds its chief point of difference, when contrasted with "Prometheus" and "Job," in the incomparably greater breadth of its scope. Regarded from the view-point of human history, if Prometheus represents that stage of Greek speculation in which mythology gives place to self-consciousness and independent thought, if Job portrays Hebrew speculation at a similar stage, Goethe's "Faust" exhibits the extreme directions as well as the many varieties of all modern European speculation, from the mediæval ages to the present time. If, on the other hand, we regard the three dramas as stages in human freedom, the first of them says to mankind: "You may criticise mythological or traditional ideas of God when they are inconsistent with justice." The second says: "You may question religious conceptions of Deity, as well as of human duty, when these conflict with man's freedom and his moral consciousness." The third drama, including and far extending all prior permissions of the kind, says: "You may question all supposed knowledge of a speculative kind, no matter what its origin, extent, or sanction." There is, in truth, no limit to the critical skepticism of "Faust." All objects of human knowledge and study, physical science no less than philosophy and theology, are involved in the same misty incertitude, and the sole task of humanity, according to Goethe, is perpetual *Streben* or search, accompanied though this be with continual liability to error.

We are cautioned, at the same time, not to forget the twofold aspect of the skepticism in "Faust." Side by side with his own suspense and contradistinguished from it, both in aim and origin, is the destructive tendency of Mephistopheles. Goethe seems to have recognized the truth that inquiry is just as much opposed to negation as to affirmation, though it is interesting to notice that, even in the rôle of Mephistopheles, he discerns some kind of utility, for the reason that, in some of its phases, destruction is the inevitable counterpart of production in nature. Still that rôle, in its tendency toward annihilation and in its effort to reduce the wondrous universe of vitality to a mere *Ewigleere* (eternal vacuum), represents that aspect of speculation which was ever most repulsive to Goethe, and whatever justification can be claimed for it is left to be made by Mephistopheles himself. No doubt the ultimate escape of Faust from the clutches of his satanic companion must be held to symbolize Goethe's conviction of the preference of suspense to negation. The drama begins with the maxim that error must accompany inquiry, and ends with the verdict that inquiry is a condition of final human redemption. Hence, Mr. Owen would say that perpetual research receives in "Faust" its benediction and apotheosis.

IV.

In the chapter assigned to "El Magico Prodigioso," the author sets forth a number of valid reasons for classifying this piece among the dramas of free thought. Unquestionably it manifests, to a certain extent, the perennial dissonance between the search after truth on the one hand and dogma on the other. At the same time, it is pointed out that the scope which Calderon allowed to his treatment of the subject was very limited. We see nothing here of the generous appreciation of all human knowledge which is to be found in the "Prometheus;" nothing of the free movement of human instincts and feelings presented in the Book of Job; less even than nothing of the profundity of the truth-searching and many-sided speculations that pertain to "Faust." Here knowledge is regarded under one aspect only, to wit, the quantum of truth which exists in the dogmas of Romanism. Of general, secular, mundane knowledge, Calderon is invariably suspicious, as, indeed, became an official of the Holy Office and an ardent Romanist priest. This temper is manifested on different occasions throughout the progress of the play. Thus the dramatist makes the Demon have a special power over the attainment of knowledge, as if the process were of an infernal nature, for when Cyprian, the hero of the piece, declares his determination to solve his doubts, the Demon replies that he will hide their solution from him. So, when the Demon describes the angelic insurrection, knowledge is put forward as the qualification that entitled him to attempt the usurpation of supremacy in heaven. Again, knowledge is connected with magic, as if the latter art, with all its infernal connotations, represented only the consummate intellectual attainment. The same spirit is manifested in Cyprian's confession, after he had become a Christian, of the unsatisfactory results of his studies. No doubt, this confession pertains to all the dramas of free thought. That study engenders doubt is a skeptical commonplace, and the recognition of it as a profound truth is not incompatible with the most untiring and determined search; but Calderon employs the maxim not as an incitement to knowledge, but as a plea for obscurantism. In short, his standpoint is that of ecclesiasticism, the standpoint, namely, that, all truth being comprehended in the creed of the Church, secular knowledge of every kind is a useless if not profane acquisition, a standpoint which, unquestionably, has much to say for itself, on grounds of antiquity, seeing that it is the ground of the prohibition imposed on Adam with reference to "the tree in the midst of the garden."

It is not disputed that, with all its shortcomings, dramatic and philosophical, Calderon's play will always excite and sustain a high degree of interest. In respect of Spanish free thought, it has a special significance. It may be characterized as the high-water mark of religious and philosophical inquiry within the limits of Spanish Romanism. That Calderon represented, and still represents, all that is most distinctive in the religion, the general culture, the manners and usages of his countrymen is undeniable. He is an authentic exponent not only of the Spain of Philip IV., but, with slight modifications, of the Spain of the present day. To a philosophical outsider, such as the late Mr. Owen was, nothing in the recent celebration of the bi-centenary of the poet's death seems more striking than the avidity with which his countrymen seized upon those natural attributes which have made Calderon the great poet of his nation, together with their sublime unconsciousness of imperfections and shortcomings, compared with which the highest altitude of poetic sentiment and imagination is devoid of any durable worth. In Mr. Owen's opinion, no greater proof could be advanced than that which Spaniards, by their undiscriminating eulogies of Calderon, have themselves proffered, of the narrowness, obscurantism, and deficiency of broad and liberal culture which continue to characterize their most benighted corner of modern Europe. When the regeneration of Spain has made unmistakable progress, we may be sure that the movement will be accompanied by an increasing depreciation of Calderon as the highest intellect of his country. Not that his real merits will ever be questioned. But Spaniards, emerging from the dark prison cells of the twin giants, ecclesiasticism and civil despotism, will soon begin to perceive that no amount of poetic imagination, no dramatic versatility or excellence, no degree of grace, tenderness, and pathos, and no power of versification can be held to compensate for teachings which, prompted by bigotry, intolerance, and religious and political servitude, have helped to intensify and sustain them.

V.

We have reserved for the last the author's exposition of "Hamlet's" relations to the other great dramas of free thought. It is pointed out, in the first place, that Hamlet, like Prometheus and Job, is at war with his surroundings. He represents one aspect of the dissonance which must inevitably emerge between the finite and the infinite. He was the victim of a remorseless fate, which is none the less harsh in that it assumes the form of an imperious duty. Hamlet, indeed, merges the idea of an overruling Providence in the allied conception of an irreversible fate, but with the government of the universe he is, like Prometheus, at open feud. He also resembles the great Titan in the fact that he represents, though not always with equal resolution, justice against crime, human right against arbitrary tyranny, and truth against falsehood and hypocrisy. He is further like him in that the motive of all his efforts, one main element of all his suffering, is his own disinterestedness, since it is clear that Hamlet was actuated, in his passion for revenge, by filial affection for his excellent father, and by a sense of the irreparable loss Denmark had sustained by that father's untimely death. So far, therefore, his sufferings, like those of Prometheus, are, in their nature, vicarious. That there are, on the other hand, points of contrast, is obvious. The high estimate, which Prometheus had formed of mankind and of its capability of progress, differs much from Hamlet's contempt for the men of his time, though it is evident that his own relations to his fellow men had been so embittered by his misfortunes as to make him incapable of pronouncing an impartial judgment on the point.

The special affinity which Hamlet bears to Job is that he is a vindicator of human rights against human falsities; he asserts the claims of the individual consciousness against social proscriptions and opinions. Like Job, Hamlet has been oppressed by the ruling powers of the universe. Like him, he refuses an unworthy compromise with what he believes to be injustice, even though it may be seated on a throne. In moody solitude, but with an invincible sense of rectitude, he stands apart, both from God and from men. Again, Hamlet both despises and refuses confidence in the unconquerable fate which is his ordinary conception of deity; treats it, in short, as Job does the Hebrew Jahve. Lastly, as Goethe's drama represents man in his struggle with the great problems of the universe, restlessly exploring every avenue to knowledge and testing every pathway that promises to lead to happiness, so Shakespeare's master character investigates the minor universe of mankind and gathers from his survey bitterness and unbelief. Faust represents the struggle of the finite with the infinite in the domain of speculative and intellectual research; Hamlet represents the same struggle in the arena of human life and social duty. Faust typifies freedom from tyrannical dogma and preconception; Hamlet, freedom from social restraints and shams and from the coercion of duties imposed without due warrant and authority. Faust longs for intellectual and scientific truth; Hamlet desires human and moral truth; while both one and the other partake of a despair of satisfying their sacred hunger. Faust dislikes the cramping and benumbing effect of false knowledge and pretentious dogma; Hamlet directs his plea against social usages and opinion, with their customary hollowness and hypocrisy. Faust, in fine, seeks eccentric paths of knowledge, as a protest against the ordinary methods of human science; Hamlet affects an "antic disposition," in order to proclaim, in part, his contempt for the formal, strait-laced maxims of mere conventionality.

M. W. H.