

“Bancroft’s California,” *Nation* (1889), pp. 140-142, 164-165. Review of volume 6.

house—for instance, where he says that it may be assumed approximately that the average distance travelled by each passenger on the railways of the United Kingdom is seventeen miles. This figure is much too large, although, in the absence of detailed statistics, it is impossible to say exactly what it ought to be.

—Most of the other pamphlets deal with the reasons for the unsatisfactory financial condition of American railroads to-day. Mr. Henry Wood of Boston, author of 'Natural Law in the Business World,' gives a plea for the "Long-Suffering Shareholder," against the abuses of Directors on the one hand and Commissioners on the other. The same general subject is treated by Daniel S. Remsen, in an able paper read before the State Bar Association, on "The Security of Railway Investments." The chief merit of Mr. Remsen's paper is its clear recognition of the fact that abuses must be met by prevention rather than by direct remedy. The railroad laws of most States are of such a character as to give every opportunity for abuses. It is by change in the laws which shall give greater safeguards to the investor that we must seek reformation, rather than by directing our attacks against the directors themselves. Mr. Charles Blair is so impressed by the inadequacy of State laws that he goes one step further, and offers a series of suggestions for the incorporation of railroads under the direct authority of the United States rather than by State charters. On the other hand, Joseph Nimmo, jr., long at the head of the Bureau of Statistics of the Interior Department, in a paper on "Cost of Transportation and Freight Charges," pleads strongly for less interference instead of more; his underlying thought being that the rate-maker has no power arbitrarily to determine rates, but is dealing with forces beyond his control. The proper function of the Inter-State Commerce Commission is to see that, in the exercise of this limited authority, he does not make unjust discriminations. We fear, however, that the tendency of the times is towards more legislation rather than less.

—In the *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* for December, C. F. Müller publishes the memorial presented by him in 1886 to the Prussian Minister of Instruction, embodying a plan for the preparation of a general catalogue of all the *Programm-abhandlungen* issued by the higher schools of Germany. The Minister seems to have been of the opinion that were such a work desirable it might very well be undertaken by some publishing firm without Government aid, but no publisher has yet been found willing to take the risk. The author of the plan now submits it to the criticism of those interested, in the hope of receiving their support in getting it carried out. It appears that from 1824 to 1875 it was required by law in Prussia, and in most of the German States as well, that the annual school programme should be accompanied by a scientific or learned dissertation; and though since 1875 this supplement is no longer obligatory, it is still customary. The annual cost of these *Programm-abhandlungen* in Prussia alone is estimated to be at the present time about thirty-six thousand dollars. This mass of material, thus issued at so great an expense—the number of these programmes published since 1824 cannot be less than thirty thousand—lies buried and forgotten in the recesses of great libraries. Practically, it is inaccessible to ordinary students, for though several catalogues exist of the programmes issued during particular periods, or in certain States, these catalogues are not only incomplete and inaccurate, but for the most part have themselves been published

only in the form of *Programm-abhandlungen*, and have shared the fate of their kind. To catalogue properly even the current issues of these programmes is a burdensome task to libraries which receive them, for probably no other class of works offers so many difficulties to the cataloguer, while the time spent upon them is, in most cases, out of all proportion to their literary or scientific value. Certainly most American librarians would consider themselves fully justified were they to deal with them as Mr. Dewey does with his pamphlets—that is, mark each one with a class number denoting its subject, pile them away on the shelves with the books on similar subjects, and allow them to be their own catalogue. At any rate, it is doubtful whether, for the sake of the few grains of wheat possibly hidden in bushels of chaff, it be worth while to drag from their dusty restingplaces, classify, and catalogue this host of perfunctory productions. Dr. Müller, however, thinks otherwise, and proposes a coöperative plan according to which each institution shall be required to prepare and send to the Minister of Instruction a complete catalogue of all its programmes; these separate catalogues are then to be combined by a competent editor in a general classified catalogue. To carry out such a plan it is evident that Government aid and influence are necessary; whether they will be forthcoming seems doubtful.

—The articles in the January number of the *Centralblatt* have mainly an antiquarian interest. Thus we are given the first instalment of an elaborate paper on the manuscripts and editions of the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise "Secretum secretorum"; an enumeration of the early editions of the Psalter which contain a German version; a full collation of a German codex now in the Salzburg library; and a brief statement of facts concerning the lost "Memoria" of Velasquez, which Adolf de Castro asserts that he discovered in printed form in 1871, with reasons for doubting Castro's discovery. In the department of library news a large space is given to recent reports of American libraries.

—A week or two before the late election in Paris, there appeared all of a sudden in the streets a great number of hawkers, offering for sale at five centimes a white-covered pamphlet entitled 'Le Brav' Général Barbenzingue.' This proved to be not, as one would naturally think, an attack on Boulanger. It was Freycinet whose caricature embellished the cover of the pamphlet, and he was surrounded by MM. Floquet, Jules Ferry, Clémenceau, and other anti-Boulangists. It soon became known that the opponents of the "brav' général" had been forestalled. They had invented the nickname Barbenzingue, and arranged with the publishing house of A. Lévy & Cie. for the publication once a week of a set of comic tableaux of Boulanger's daily life under the title that we have given above. By some indiscretion their plan was disclosed, and the Boulangists, under the direction of M. Paul Deroulède, took the wind out of their sails by stealing their title and getting out a pamphlet in the opposite sense under it. This has not, however, prevented the publication of the tableaux as proposed. They appear under the title of 'Le Vrai Général Barbenzingue,' and consist of mildly amusing dialogue, with clever illustrations in outline. It is reported that A. Lévy & Cie. will bring a suit against M. Deroulède.

—Those who are curious about the 'Rig-Veda' are now enabled to read the whole of it in English. On the penultimate volume of the translation of it mainly executed by the late

Professor H. H. Wilson, of Oxford, we reported briefly in No. 1198 of the *Nation*. The greater part of that volume was the work of its editors, Professor E. B. Cowell and Mr. W. F. Webster. Of the sixth and last volume, published, like the two preceding it, by Trübner & Co., of London, Mr. Webster has had the sole editorial charge. Otherwise than was the case with the fifth volume, the rough version prepared by Professor Wilson was here left complete. This its editor has given as he found it, with the exception of correcting its obvious misrenderings, and of conforming it, by occasional indispensable alterations, to the interpretation of the commentator Sâyana, whom the Professor avowedly aimed to follow, and, so far as he understood his guide, did follow. Welcome as is his translation, something different is required, however, and, in time, doubtless will be forthcoming, towards a right appreciation of the ancient original. Simplicity of style was, of course, to be expected; and we have instead a stateliness of diction, not to say stiltedness, such as might have been looked for in a representation of Homer by Gibbon or Dr. Johnson. Moreover, modern criticism is often competent to convict Sâyana of misprision; somewhat as, at the present day, scholars are in a position to demonstrate that Spenser and his Elizabethan contemporaries in some instances misapprehended Chaucer. Yet, even from the 'Rig-Veda' as we already have it in our mother tongue, one can, no question, form a substantially accurate notion of the fancies entertained by the early Hindus touching matters supramundane. To fathom those fancies has long been to many a subject of profound interest. As we near this consummation, however, the interest which was formerly so eager, is rapidly abating. The conclusion which, on exploring the oldest of the Indian scriptures, impartial investigators have arrived at may be summed up in a very few words. It seems to be little more than that the theology, including both Brahmanism and Buddhism, of the Indo-Aryans and countless of their neighbors, took its rise from a fatuity of childishness trenching close on the inconceivable, and only slightly less absurd than the dreams of ordinary barbarians.

BANCROFT'S CALIFORNIA.—I

California. Vol. VI. (1848-1850). [History of the Pacific States of North America. By Hubert Howe Bancroft. Vol. XVIII.] San Francisco: The History Co. 1888. 8vo, pp. xii, 787.

THIS sixth volume of Bancroft's History of California is concerned with the most important portion of the whole subject, the story of the young commonwealth from the moment of the discovery of gold to the death of Senator Broderick in 1859. The scale on which the book is written changes with the times. We have no longer the exhaustive minuteness of detail found in the earlier volumes, since the very complexity of the life of the gold period forbade the writers engaged upon these years to hope for completeness. The result has in fact been that they have contented themselves with a comparatively limited selection from the vast wealth of material at their disposal. No general reader, and possibly no subscriber to Mr. Bancroft's series, will lament this condensation; and doubtless many would have been glad of the same thing in earlier volumes. But at any rate plenty of room is left for future local historians. As to one of the most noteworthy matters in the whole history, the development of popular justice in the mines and in the great cities, this volume is especially

brief, the fuller account of the subject having been recently given in the two bulky volumes of the same series on 'Popular Tribunals'—volumes which we may notice hereafter. The present volume discusses in particular the early history of mining, from Marshall's discovery down, the growth of the cities and towns, the organization of the State Government, the character of society in the first few years, the struggles over the settlement of land titles, and the history of party warfare until the fatal duel between Terry and Broderick.

In beginning our comments, our memory naturally recurs to the earlier volumes of the series, and especially to the immediately previous one, containing the story of the conquest. This is, as we still feel, by far the strongest of Mr. Bancroft's series relating to California; and, as readers of our review of that volume may remember, we mentioned the tolerably strong case which Mr. Bancroft there makes out against the legend that England was on the very point of seizing California in 1846, when our naval force interposed to save for us the golden land. Since writing our review, a wholly new piece of evidence bearing on the subject has come into our hands, and we know of no better place than this for putting it on record, especially as it confirms Mr. Bancroft's view in quite an unexpected way. The turning-point of the whole story is this: In the early part of 1846 the beginning of the Mexican war was plainly very near. Commodore Sloat, in command of our fleet on the west coast, was lying in the harbor at Mazatlan with his flagship, the *Savannah*, waiting for news of the outbreak of hostilities. On May 17 he heard the first news of hostilities on the Rio Grande, and on May 31 wrote to the Secretary of the Navy that he was ready to sail immediately to take possession of the ports of California, in accordance with his well-known instructions of June 24, 1845. On further thought Sloat, with unpardonable timidity, resolved to wait for still more news before sailing, and actually, even after hearing of the capture of Matamoros, wrote to the Secretary on June 6 that he doubted his own authority to take the ports until a formal declaration of war should be certain. Not until the next day, June 7, did he make up his mind to leave, having received news of the blockade of Vera Cruz (see Bancroft, vol. v, pp. 206, 207). Shortly before these dates Admiral Seymour, with the British flagship *Collingwood*, had been lying in the same harbor, apparently waiting for news. Not far from the time when Sloat set out for Monterey, Seymour sailed also. Of the date of Seymour's departure no record has hitherto appeared, but on the 16th of July Seymour reached Monterey, about a week after the American occupation had been proclaimed. The British and American ships exchanged courtesies, and then the *Collingwood* sailed for the Hawaiian Islands. These are the only known facts which form the basis for the legend that Seymour had long been under orders to seize California as soon as hostilities should break out between ourselves and Mexico, that he set sail upon hearing the news of Taylor's battles, that he raced with Sloat to Monterey, and that only the superior promptness, astuteness, and seamanship of our great hero, Sloat, combined with Capt. Frémont's courage on land, saved California from British occupation.

Mr. Bancroft's arguments, as given in vol. v, are doubtless sufficient to show the improbability of the legendary portion of this story. Our new piece of evidence, very slight, but very conclusive, relates to a little matter that has heretofore always been obscure, viz., the

actual movements of the *Collingwood* at this time. "In reality," says Mr. Bancroft, vol. v, page 213, "little is known of the *Collingwood's* trip, except the date of her arrival at Monterey. Lieut. Fred Walpole of that vessel wrote 'Four Years in the Pacific'; but he pays little or no attention to politics, or to details of the vessel's movements." Anxious to discover further evidence, if any should be accessible, as to the cruise of the *Collingwood* upon this occasion, we were led some time since to inquire of Mr. Clements Markham, the well-known English author, who, as we chanced to learn, was in 1846 serving as a young midshipman on board Admiral Seymour's flagship. Mr. Markham was unable from memory to throw any new light upon the matter, but he was kind enough to communicate for us with Admiral Lord Alcester, who, as Lieut. Beauchamp Seymour, was flag-lieutenant to his own uncle, Admiral Seymour, at the time in question. Lord Alcester's statement, which he courteously sent to us through Mr. Markham, and which he consented to have published, speaks for itself. It is under date of May, 1887:

"I know for certain that Sir George Seymour never had orders to hoist the English flag in California, or to assume the protectorate of that dependency of Mexico in 1846, or at any other time. Neither was there a race between him and Commodore Sloat as to who would reach Monterey first. If we had wanted to precede the *Savannah* there, we should not have begun by going in an opposite direction for several days; for I see by my journal that we left Mazatlan (where the *Savannah* was) on the 24th of May, 1846, arrived at San Blas, which is to the southward, on the 27th, did not leave San Blas until June 13, and arrived in Monterey on July 16. Sir George Seymour treated me with confidence on public matters, and I was completely au fait of all questions with which he had to deal, and of the orders he received. He went to California to protect English commerce and interests."

Lord Alcester adds in substance that the immediate reason for going was the receipt of fresh news of the unsettled condition of the country in the north. That the *Collingwood* was at San Blas at the critical moment has been asserted in one or two versions of the story, but that she went there as late as May 24, and stayed until June 13, is quite new to history.

Legends have a fashion of dying hard, and doubtless this English episode in the story of the conquest will often hereafter be repeated and enjoyed. But if records are worth more than wild surmises, and if Lord Alcester's journal outweighs the bad memories of other men, then not only is Mr. Bancroft's view of this matter irrefutably established, but the "race" between Sloat and Seymour appears in a very amusing light. Instead of "outwitting" Seymour, and getting the start of him, Sloat stayed at Mazatlan two weeks after Seymour had left. Instead of going to Monterey at once, Seymour went to San Blas. In short, while the American hero of the great "race" was lying at anchor, his English competitor in the race was sailing the other way. The whole mass of tradition about the matter, from 1848 downwards, thus becomes another interesting example of the fallibility of memory and of the vitality of delusion.

We return to the volume immediately before us. On the whole, of course, in view of the great amount of research represented, we have here the best treatment extant of the years 1848-59 in their entirety for California. As to matters of detail, the elaborate description (pp. 168-190) of the new San Francisco of 1849, the chapter on the early cities of California (ch. xviii, pp. 446-480), and the very scholarly chapter on the Mexican Land Titles (ch. xx,

pp. 529-581), are the most important treasures of information in the volume. The last-named chapter, probably from the same hand which is responsible for the clean work and sound results of vol. v, gives, so far as we know, the first accessible and fairly popular summary of all the main facts of that land litigation which for a quarter of a century meant so much evil to California. The most noteworthy cases are summarized in fine print, and in alphabetical order. The conflicting interests concerned are stated with impartiality, and the conclusions are cautiously drawn. As to more attractive topics, the chapters on the gold discovery, on the Constitutional Convention of 1849, on the mining life, and on the flibustering expeditions of Raousset and Walker, are examples of the best. These more popular chapters are decidedly unequal. That one among Mr. Bancroft's collaborators who may best be known as the Rhetorician, is occasionally allowed a freedom which he has not heretofore enjoyed during the progress of this History of California. Elsewhere in the series, as in portions of the history of the northwest coast, this unfortunate person has played altogether too large a part, and one hates to have to meet him in a region which he has usually spared. Apart from his presence, however, one feels, even where one is most in doubt about agreeing with Mr. Bancroft, the great authority which the wide use of many sources of information gives the book.

Criticism occurs to us, however, with respect to the accuracy of the use of some of this material. Where many collaborators are responsible, inconsistencies must creep in; and the less critical workers may cite as authority what their betters elsewhere expressly declare to be worthless. A remarkable case is furnished by a booklet which, as this volume now stands, takes rather too dignified a place among the authorities bearing on the first summer of gold-mining. 1848 is, in comparison to later years, a poor year for sources of information. There were very few immigrants that year by way of the Plains; the gold excitement suspended for some time newspaper publication, as well as other ordinary means of recording events; and most people in California were too busy to write coherently. Mason's and Larkin's reports, Colton's diary, and a very few other sketches, tell us all that we know of what happened among the miners that summer and autumn. In view of this fact, the little pamphlet of thirty pages entitled 'Three Weeks in the Gold Mines,' purporting to be written by "Henry I. Simpson of the New York Volunteers," and published under date of 1848, by Joyce & Co. of New York, would seem to be a very useful addition to the slender material. Yet this work has lately been more than once declared a worthless fraud, written by a man who had never seen California. In particular, Mr. Bancroft's pioneer list, in vol. iv, under the name Simpson, curtly says that nothing besides the name can be discovered as bearing upon this person, and that probably the work was a forgery, concocted in New York. Yet, in the present volume, Simpson is several times cited as authority, e. g., page 410, and, on page 97, a lengthy note gives a characterization of the pamphlet, in which it is taken in perfect good faith. Its pretentiousness is sharply criticised, as are also its entirely unauthentic illustrations, "but," says our author, "Mr. Simpson is not the only one who has attempted to enlighten the world respecting this region after a ten or twenty days' ride through it." The note closes with saying of Simpson that, notwithstanding all, "he printed a book on California gold in the year of its discovery, and

this atones for many defects. Had all done as well as this soldier-adventurer, we should not lack material for the history of California."

Lest some collector should be led by this remark of Mr. Bancroft's to regard this pamphlet as a treasure, and lest some student should cite it as characterizing correctly the glories of that first golden summer, let us call attention to pages 1 and 6 of Simpson's truthful tale. Page 1 relates how, on setting out from San Francisco for the mines, Simpson's party first passed through "flower-decked prairies" until they reached San José. Page 6, in describing the country more scientifically, says that "the valley of the Sacramento is connected with the head of the Bay of San Francisco by a delta some thirty miles in breadth, through the flowery meads of which, as I have already described, the first part of our pleasant journey lay. This delta is part of the fertile valley of San José." And so, as one sees, the Sacramento River empties into the Bay of San Francisco through a delta which lies between the towns of San Francisco and San José, and which, as page 1 tells us, is filled in August with murmuring and meandering streams, with flowers of every hue, and with several other objects well known to old-fashioned poetry. All this Simpson wrote within a few weeks from the time when, if he told the truth, he had actually ridden through the August dust and drought around the long Bay, and had found the Sacramento "delta" sixty or seventy miles distant from San José, and far to the northeast of San Francisco, while he had left San José fifty miles to the south of San Francisco. Just such geographical nonsense would be, of course, very easy if one was writing with the aid of a few books and a bad map in a far distant land. In short, Simpson, if that was his name, was a liar, and the truth was not in him, and he was probably in New York. And if he had ever seen California, he had forgotten it most thoroughly. What makes his book attractive, however, is its ingeniously circumstantial manner of narrating the wholly fictitious adventures of its heroes during their wanderings from Monterey to "Shastl Peak," as well as the artificial literary form, which throughout shows the trained and decidedly clever hack-writer. It is to be hoped that Simpson himself took the gold fever that his book was meant to produce, and, going to California, was hanged in due time under the shadow of "Shastl Peak," or elsewhere. Meanwhile he should not be quoted as authority for the life of the summer of 1848.

RECENT NOVELS.

A Man Story. By E. W. Howe. Boston: Ticknor & Co.

The Graysons: A Story of Illinois. By Edward Eggleston. With illustrations by Allegra Eggleston. The Century Co.

From Moor Isles. By Jessie Fothergill. [Leisure Hour Series.] Henry Holt & Co.

Our Phil, and Other Stories. By Katharine Floyd Dana. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1889.

Behind Closed Doors. By Anna Katharine Green. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1888.

The Son of a Star: A Romance of the Second Century. By Benjamin Ward Richardson. Longmans, Green & Co.

MR. E. W. HOWE is best known as the author of 'The Story of a Country Town,' which has won high praise from two critics who have not derived their knowledge of Western life solely from books and newspapers. When Mr. Howells and Mark Twain both certify that

they have been struck by such a picture, we may be sure at least that it is worth looking at, especially when there is more agreement than we are wont to expect from critics as to what the features of the picture are. "Amid the prevailing harshness and aridity," says one of them, "there are episodes of tenderness and self-devotion that are like springs of water out of the ground." "Your pictures of the arid village life," says the other, "and the insides and outsides of its people, are vivid, and, what is more, true. I know, for I have seen it all, and lived it all." The aridity, it should be noticed, is inherent in the life described, and not in the author. What epithet would best mark the literary peculiarities of such a novel or sketch as 'A Man Story,' it is not easy to say. It is distinctly American, and it is distinctly queer. There is an atmosphere of pathos and humor combined with eccentricity which recalls Dickens—as, for instance, in the character of Joe Tack, so singularly occupied in writing spirit letters to himself from his departed wife—and again in the whole tone of the narrative, which is that of a boy relating the story of the older people with whom he lives. The plot deals with love, and is such a bewilderingly improbable story, redeemed by affecting touches, that the whole produces a sort of unearthly impression. Uncle Tom's obstinate repudiation of his wife is so wholly stupid and unnecessary that the reader wonders at times at his own interest in the story; yet we doubt if any one who reads half the book can refrain from finishing it.

The scene is laid in the very heart of the great Western divorce country—that is, somewhere where divorce is regarded as a natural consequence of any ill-assorted marriage, and where at the same time this does not interfere with a high development of fidelity and affection between those fortunately constituted mates who are designed for each other by nature. Combined with a good deal of literary cleverness, there is what an artist would complain of as a total lack of background. We feel that we are in a new place, in a society without any past, without any associations, in which (apart from the eternal passion which keeps the world going) there is nothing left of all that has made life interesting and attractive except railroads as a means of locomotion and "dry goods" as its object. The very language of the story is not the English of literature, but a curious mixture, in which a literary flavor contends with a strong disposition towards bad grammar. Altogether, is this a new species of literature, or is it merely a poor and outlandish species? Heaven forbid that we should find any fault with it as being Western. But what is it?

Mr. Eggleston's pictures of Western life are always worth reading. In 'The Graysons' he has introduced as one of his characters Abraham Lincoln—the main incident of the story being the acquittal of the hero of a charge of murder through Lincoln's dramatic exposure, on the trial, of the perjury of the principal witness for the prosecution. The plot of the story is simple enough, and is made the means of introducing us to Illinois life of a generation ago or more. The dialect is carefully given, and most of the characters drawn with distinct individuality and interest. The Graysons themselves, Tom, Barbara, and the old mother, are very well portrayed, and the attempts to lynch Tom furnish lively reading. Mr. Eggleston would probably disclaim all intention to idealize, nevertheless he contrives to infuse a dash of romance into early Western life which possibly is not true to nature, yet is not on that account necessarily reprehensible.

In 'From Moor Isles' there are two plots which ramble along side by side with a very loose bond of connection. The hero is the lover of a wicked but weak girl who, while secretly engaging herself to another, lures the devoted Brian Holgate to his ruin. This is effected by teaching him how to play poker, a game at which he is unmercifully "bluffed" by his astute rival, Dicky Law. He loses all he has in the world, including his paternal estate, Moor Isles, and at the same moment is made aware of the perfidy of the deceitful Lucy, and driven forth naked into the world. He is loved by the excellent Alice Ormerod, who has only one failing—that of unwittingly letting too many people into the secret of her love; and Alice saves him, gets him a position as secretary or assistant to a musical genius who is going to make the tour of the United States, and in the end he comes back to tell Alice of his changed fortunes and of his marriage to another—for Alice is one of those foredoomed to self-sacrifice and disappointment. The story terminates in a very pretty and pathetic scene between the two. Lucy has been killed, so that the ending of the book is generally satisfactory. Miss Fothergill has a good heart; she desires the welfare of the good and the punishment of the evil-doer, especially if the evil-doer be of her own sex; she understands, like every true woman, how to measure out justice to her own sex rather than to the other; and if there is one virtue for which she has a failing, it is that of self-sacrifice. Her men are consequently less well drawn than her women.

The art of telling stories of negro life is a rare gift, and only to be acquired by much experience and sympathy. The author of 'Our Phil' had it to a high degree. Phil himself, Aunt Roey, and Marty are all real characters, thorough negroes; and the simple story of their lives is full of a peculiar charm. We regret to learn from the preface that the author, who published them in the *Atlantic Monthly* some fifteen years ago under the name of Olive A. Wadsworth, is no longer living. They have been republished in the belief—quite justified by the volume itself—"that they possess merit which will not only make the book a joy to her wide circle of warmly attached friends, but a pleasure to the reading public."

'Behind Closed Doors' is a story which does great credit to the author's ingenuity. Not in Gaboriau, not in Boisgobey, not even in Wilkie Collins, is a plot so laboriously involved to be found. The only difficulty with Mrs. Green's books is that she puts too great a strain on her readers' attention. It is not within the powers of the ordinary mind to retain control of the contradictory and conflicting incidents which mask the central mystery of the plot; and before we have gone very far we find ourselves rather confused than puzzled, while at the end we are not quite sure whether everything is satisfactorily explained or not. In other words, a sense of oppression is produced, which shows the construction of the story to be faulty. With a little more simplicity, 'Behind Closed Doors' would be more satisfactory and at the same time quite as lurid and blood-curdling.

"Come, my reader, come, and for a few short hours dream with me," is the not too tempting invitation with which Dr. Richardson's phantasy opens. As a matter of fact, a few short hours will not at all suffice for the mazes of a dream so ponderous and complicated. Fact and fancy, history and miracle disport themselves with a diverting interchangeability which becomes somewhat bewildering in the course of nearly five hundred closely printed pages. Beginning while the Emperor Haarian is in Britain in the year 120, Simeon, the Son

quality of the verse is on the whole that of a rhymed paraphrase of a prose translation. It bears sometimes so little resemblance to the original that one wonders if the author had ever read Dante in Italian. In the first place, words, phrases, sometimes whole lines, are put in to fill up the verse and to make out the rhymes. Dante says (*Inf.* v, 50): "Master, who are those people whom the black air thus lashes?" (Carlyle). Mr. Wilstach translates: "Master, I fain would know Who are these people whom the darkening air So seems to lash and buffet, beat, and tear." *Un bel flumicello* (*Inf.* iv, 108) is "a stream with prattling falls." *Questo passammo* (*Inf.* iv, 109) is "We pass the dimpling stream." Marzia (*Inf.* iv, 128) becomes "Marcia, pure of heart"; Corniglia, "Cornelia gemmed"; Lavinia sua figlia (*Inf.* iv, 126), "Lavinia with her wedding-ring" (1). Adjectives and short phrases are inserted without the slightest provocation, and it is doubtful if there are five consecutive lines in the whole translation in which there is not some noticeable addition to Dante's idea. For last illustrations take these: Dante writes (*Inf.* ii, 111, 112),

"Com'io, dopo cotal parole fatte,
Venni quaggiù del mio beato scanno."

Mr. Wilstach translates: "As I, when sweet From sacred lips came forth this message meet, My seat to leave with all its glories strewed." The description of Charon, "Charon the demon, with eyes of glowing coal, beckoning them, collects them all; smites with his oar whoever lingers" (Carlyle), reads, "Demonic Charon with his eyes like coals That glow in furnaces keen, collects the crowd, His stout oar those who linger smiting loud." And this is fidelity in translating a writer who weighs his adjectives like fine gold. What would Mr. Wilstach have written had he not avoided the freedom of a prose translation?

In the second place, Mr. Wilstach never scruples to insert a figure of speech of his own when Dante uses none, or to change one which does not meet his approbation. Such instances as follow are not rare; similar ones can be found on almost every page. "She is Semiramis, of whom we read that she succeeded Ninus, and was his spouse" (Carlyle, *Inf.* v, 58), is translated: "Semiramis she is; her consort Nisus, he Left her his throne when death's knell set him free." Again, "And I saw the great Achilles, who fought at last with love" (Carlyle, *Inf.* v, 65-6), becomes, "And saw the great Achilles who, at last, Through love the line of safety rashly past." A little below: "And more than a thousand shades he showed me, whom love had parted from our life," becomes, "And until More than a thousand flitted, had he shown Me with his finger where love's wrecks were strewn." It is scarcely worth while to cite more. The translation is entirely destitute of the two qualities which are most marked in Dante, simplicity and directness. The simplest, plainest statement must be tortured into a roundabout form; e. g., "Dritti brevemente, mi rispose, Perch'io non temo di venir qua entro," has to be turned into "Thee briefly will I tell the reason why No fear me kept within those regions high."

Lastly, the translation, the paraphrase rather, is not intelligible. There are cantos in it which no English-speaking person could read aloud understandingly without the greatest effort, and that, too, when the corresponding cantos in the original are absolutely simple. Mr. Wilstach's prefatory sonnet to Dante is perhaps not an unfair example of the lucidity with which he writes, and as such is worth giving in full;

"Poet divine, or, yet, in terraces meek
The effulgent Cross of southern oceans lights,
Or, throned where Seraphs, in empyrean heights,
Close contemplation of the Highest seek;
Thy heaviest woes from wrath that factions wreak,
Thy keen resentments voiced in melody's flights,
Safe thou from Minos and Infernal rites:
On whose behalf was Beatrice moved to speak
With Virgil's shade, his aid export to pray;
On this thine humble follower's task do thou
Look down benign! Since went thy soul its way
From out the western waves hath risen, and now
Hails thy great Muse, a realm more wide than
Rome's, And give thy themes their thoughts its studious
homes."

To sum up: Mr. Wilstach's notes are not accurate, they are not scholarly, they are not at first hand. His translation is not faithful, it is not accurate, it is not intelligible. Is there any excuse for such a piece of work when we have Longfellow's faithful translation in verse-form, and the excellent version by Carlyle of the *Inferno* in prose? Is it likely that Mr. Wilstach's translation will become the standard one in English? We think not, nor can we look forward with pleasure to the appearance of Mr. Wilstach's "companion volume, devoted to Dante, the Danteans, and things Dantean."

BANCROFT'S CALIFORNIA.—II.

California. Vol. VI. (1848-1850). [History of the Pacific States of North America. By Hubert Howe Bancroft. Vol. XVIII.] San Francisco: The History Co. 1888. 8vo, pp. xii, 787.

MISTAKES about minor authorities such as our previous notice illustrated must, of course, occur in the course of an elaborate undertaking like this. The chief difficulty that they cause us lies in the distrust they must needs give us of the more important results of our author, when he has to judge greater and more doubtful matters, such as the general tone of society in the early days, the general trend of the political movements of the years before the war, and the characters of leading public men. As to the social order, to be sure, Mr. Bancroft avoids serious problems by giving us, in general without extravagance, a very full description of rather well-known classes of facts. His material is vast; but there is surely much yet to be done in the way of estimating the real social forces at work. That California society was in a sense cosmopolitan we know, but nobody has yet shown us just how much and in what sense its forms and its tone were determined by foreign and how much by American influences. The foreign influences—the Sidney convicts, the Spanish-Americans, the bull-fights, the gambling sports, the dances, and the rest—were of a nature to display themselves very openly. In consequence, the American account of the early days has often explained what happened by saying that Americans went out as honest miners, but found themselves surrounded, corrupted, and even abused by wicked foreigners, until at last they arose in their might, lynched and intimidated the foreigners, and so made all well. To this notion Mr. Bancroft's facts give, on the whole, no great countenance; but really to understand the society of the early days we still need much more statistical and systematic knowledge of the relative numbers and of the relative behaviors of the various constituents of the population than we yet possess. Although complete information upon this subject will never be obtainable, there is doubtless much more possible than Mr. Bancroft has yet accomplished in the way of a scientific examination of the sociology of the gold period. So full are all who describe those days of a sense of the wonder of the thing, that it is still very hard to get men to study the subject simply

and straightforwardly, and to look upon early California as a highly interesting collection of largely abnormal but still, for that very reason, so much the more instructive social and psychological phenomena.

Upon one interesting topic in particular Mr. Bancroft furnishes, as was indeed almost necessary in so general a work, very little important information, and that is upon the workings of early municipal government. To be sure, two chapters of the volume are devoted to the Annals of San Francisco, and, in the chapter on "City-building," the fortunes of Sacramento during its first few years are briefly summarized. But such annalistic summaries are far from being scientific analyses; and surely, while the annals of cities as such are likely to mean little but confusion and weariness to the general reader, serious examinations of the inner lives of cities are at present among our greatest desiderata. And, as some study of the facts has convinced the present reviewer, no cities could well furnish within so narrow a range more instructive lessons, at any rate in the pathology of municipal government, than could San Francisco and Sacramento, if their records and newspaper files were carefully and scientifically scrutinized for the first ten years of the gold period. The changes were so rapid, the municipal needs to be met were so varied, the devices used were so manifest, the evils were so great, and the reforms of the immediately pressing evils were in more than one case so swift and so complete, that the whole forms a sort of hospital study of numerous forms of acute municipal derangement, with several remarkable cases of at least temporary cure. Professor Moses, in his "Beginnings of Municipal Government in San Francisco" (in the Johns Hopkins "Studies"), has really led the way in a field where no small service can be done to political science. And we would strongly urge upon intelligent Californians of wealth the propriety of encouraging such studies, say, at the University of California, by founding a fund for prize essays on early municipal government in California, and on other related questions. Surely, with the appearance of Mr. Bancroft's book, the day of mere annals ought to end. What Californians now have to do is to understand their early history, which, properly viewed, is a treasure-house of instruction in curious social and mental phenomena.

But we come at last to the portion of Mr. Bancroft's book where of necessity he moves on the most doubtful ground, and where, at the same time, his results have a very high interest, even if we cannot always agree with him. We refer to the political history of the ante-bellum days in California. As was to be expected, this history becomes very largely an account of the great contest between Broderick and Gwin, and the culminating point of the whole is his characterization of David Broderick, the Irish stone-cutter's son, who became by dint of courage and good fortune a Senator of national reputation, and whose tragic death made him a popular hero. To characterize Broderick in public is, as everybody in San Francisco knows, to offend some one very seriously; but Mr. Bancroft is obliged to take sides, and he takes, on the whole, the easier side. Broderick was a lone, sad, heroic, solemn, burning, aspiring soul, a born hero, the noblest of his race, with steel-blue eyes that occasionally shot sparks of fire. He was incorruptible, although it must be confessed that on occasion he corrupted other people. He was too lofty a being to desire the spoils of office, although, when he became Senator, his first thought was how to secure the most of them for his friends.

His whole life was a battle against baseness, inasmuch that he once made a disgraceful bargain with his enemy, Gwin, about the distribution of Federal patronage. This bargain he treated as confidential, denying its existence until he was sufficiently angry at Gwin, when he gave himself the lie, and described it in full. The combined chivalry hereupon plotted to slay him in the course of a projected series of duels, but, as he was a noble-hearted man and no fire-eater, he, for his part, only plotted to slay his Senatorial colleague, Gwin, since duelling was opposed to the Constitution of his State, and could not properly be pursued to excess by any good citizen, however lone or burning or aspiring his soul. Unfortunately Terry interposed and Broderick was killed. He was not buried in consecrated ground, a fact which leads Mr. Bancroft to denounce priestcraft with some vigor.

If, however, one wonders, on reading this statement of Broderick's virtues, why we say that Mr. Bancroft, in eulogizing him with so much eloquence, takes the easier side in an old California controversy, we can only reply that the inquirer knows not Broderick, nor the generation that lived side by side with Broderick. If anything, indeed, is remarkable in California history to an outsider, surely Broderick's great reputation, if viewed at all closely, will seem not the least of the marvels. The lovers of Broderick are always so inarticulate, so given to metaphors and interjections, so incapable of a rational statement of the faith that is in them! And, on the other hand, a critic of Broderick finds his way, from a purely rational point of view, so plain! And yet, we repeat the paradox, to eulogize Broderick in that inarticulate fashion is, after all, for an average progressive Californian, especially if he be of Northern stock, so much easier than to condemn him on those plain rational grounds. For, first of all, Broderick was by common consent a fascinating and baffling personality—lovable, to be sure, and ferocious, like many another Irishman, but withal a lonesome, dignified, melancholy man, whom people could not fathom, and whom all his friends accordingly regarded as full of deep and wonderful promise and power. This was simply the actual personal effect produced by the man upon others. Hence a leader who was probably no great wonder of depth at all, and who was merely an ambitious but comparatively ignorant man, who worked hard to improve his wits, who brooded much over all his failures, and who was very jealous, warm-hearted, high-spirited, and selfish, became, in the eyes of admirers and even of enemies, a mystery and a genius. And next, Broderick, partly by fortune and partly by choice, was led to take sides with the distinctively Northern section of his party. Thus he gradually became more and more nearly an anti-slavery man. Had he lived to see the war, he would have been a prominent Republican leader. He was hated violently by the Southerners for years; he was long the only man in California who could meet them successfully in political warfare; and his death at the hands of Judge Terry made him seem to the Republicans of the war times a martyr of the John Brown type. That his warfare against the chivalry expressed much more his private personal ambitions than his patriotism, was easily forgotten. He had opposed the extension of slavery in the Territories, and he had attacked Buchanan's Administration. Was not this enough? Some men, indeed, opposed the extension of slavery because they loved human freedom, whereas Broderick did so because he hated Gwin. Some men assailed Buchanan's Administration because they found it evil,

while Broderick joined their number chiefly because Buchanan gave him no share in the Federal patronage. But such defects are of very small importance in case of a martyr for a great cause, and so one in vain reminds Broderick's friends of the plain facts. Finally, as to Broderick's obvious lack of principle in conducting his political warfare, his admirers have only to reply, as Mr. Bancroft in effect does, that no politician could possibly have succeeded in those days in California whose incorruptible soul was unwilling to disguise its honesty under unrighteous cloaks. Everything was base except Broderick's noble purpose, and of course this noble purpose had to use bribery, corrupt associates, lies, and the rest, as its tools. The whole matter is therefore very plain, and to praise is far easier than to condemn. To be sure, Mr. John H. Hittell, in his 'History of San Francisco,' and yet more recently, in a criticism of Mr. Bancroft (*Overland Monthly* for January, 1889), has persisted in condemning Broderick as a corrupt demagogue, and in giving what we fancy to be very plain reasons for his view; but then, Mr. J. H. Hittell has long since shown himself to be comparatively destitute of poetical imagination, and has a fondness for insisting upon plain reasons, and for taking the unpopular side. To be sure, also, Mr. Bancroft himself, with praiseworthy frankness, puts on record most of the disgraceful facts of Broderick's career; but then, disgraceful facts count for so much less than noble sentiments!

After all, however, this paradoxical career and reputation of Broderick must be regarded as forming an episode at once very romantic and highly instructive in early California life. We often wonder that nobody has yet made Broderick the hero of a novel. We also often wonder why only local historians, such as Hittell, O'Meara, and Bancroft, should have been attracted by a story which illustrates in a very interesting way forces and conflicts that are still active in our national life.

MORE NOVELS.

First Harvests. By F. J. Stimson (J. S. of Dale). Charles Scribner's Sons.

Annie Kilburn. By W. D. Howells. Harpers.

The Countess Eva. By J. H. Shorthouse. Macmillan & Co.

A Heart Regained. By Carmen Sylva. Boston: Cupples & Hurd.

Pen. By the Author of 'Laddie,' etc. Boston: Roberts Brothers.

Remember the Alamo. By Amelia E. Barr. Dodd, Mead & Co.

Testa. By Paolo Mantegazza. Translated from the Italian. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co.

In Far Lochaber. By William Black. Harpers.

Colonel Quaritch, V. C. By Rider Haggard. Harpers.

'FIRST HARVESTS' is described on the title-page as "A Satire without a Moral." Thus, if it should have no other interest, it piques curiosity about what sort of a composition a satire without its pith and marrow may be. The subject is large, and one which, treated satirically, whether with biting invective or humorous extravagance, it is difficult to keep the moral out of. The 'First Harvests' are the first yield of the social seed sown by the founders of the Republic. If the author sees aright, the vigorous abundance of tares must embitter the joys of paradise for the long-departed

fathers. Noxious weeds are everywhere, thriving equally amidst splendor and squalor, but the great stock of pristine virtue has perished, or lives only in wayside flowers. There is more moral than satire in this exhibition of our social conditions, and Mr. Stimson's definition seems to be at fault.

The first fruits described most minutely are apples of Sodom that cluster and dangle about a house situated on Fifth Avenue, and owned by Mrs. Levison-Gower, herself the ripest specimen. Precedence is given to these apples, not because they are the most prolific yield, but because they excite a frenzy of envy, and because to become one of them is the greatest good conceivable to multitudes. The influence of their baneful splendor is extended even to those whose heads they hang hopelessly above. Their tantalizing remoteness creates an impulse of destruction, surging occasionally into mad desire to tear them down and grind them in the dust of their own sacred precincts. The truth of this picture of almost universal devotion to pleasures which can be had for money, and eagerness to share them, is unquestionable; but, on examination of the separate apples, it turns out that, if no better than they should be, they are not so bad as they might be. The ashes concealed by a rosy surface are at the worst mere dry dust of folly. The author, or one of his characters, remarks that American society doesn't mean anything, having neither love nor politics for its end. That is why our society is dull and our society novel duller, and why the women in both have only decorative significance. The English knight-errant of the novel judged Mrs. Levison-Gower and her satellites with Old-World eyes. The author, in spite of his dark innuendoes, knows that they respected the commandments, for no authoritative preacher has declared that the women who merely vulgarize a nation are in danger of hell-fire. Mrs. Levison-Gower's experimental elopement with Mr. Wemyss illustrates very fairly her set's possibilities for iniquity. Nine out of ten of them would only have talked about eloping, and the tenth, like Mrs. Gower, would bring up at the hearth of "nice" relations in Boston.

Mr. Stimson's literary form and style have been perceptibly influenced by Thackeray, and by his social satire, with universally applicable moral, 'Vanity Fair.' Like Thackeray, he is at his best in independent addresses to the reader, but he has almost none of that novelist's art of combination, of grouping, of presenting a complete picture of individuals and a clear idea of their reciprocal influences. With the exception of Mrs. Gower, his people are only half made, and each one takes his way practically according to his will. Such liberty is not life, especially it is not social life. The interpolated reflections on a number of "burning questions" are generally sagacious and keen and admirably expressed. The poetical passages, apropos of nothing in particular, are very pleasant, and have the effect of a Roman punch served between courses—they encourage one to go on.

The scene of 'Annie Kilburn' is remote from that of 'First Harvests,' and the people are of a somewhat different breed; yet, nevertheless, one gathers from it that our God is Mammon, and that the Republic, in all that concerns a fine and high development of the race, is so far a failure. The New England conscience is wearing old, only showing fight in an irresolute Annie Kilburn with a propensity for meddling in the affairs of the "lower classes," or in a Mr. Peck, of vague and mystical utterance, pushing towards unpractical experiment. Mr. Howells in a way here justifies himself