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VOL. II.—JULY, 1864.—NO. I.

ENGLAND'S WEAKNESS.

IF there be any thing in which British and American conservatives put full faith, it is in the stability of the English Government as based on English social institutions. It may be doubted whether Osymandias in all his glory, when he raised his rose-red city to defy Time, or the children of the race of Oerindur, who modestly proclaimed that, though heaven and earth should pass away, their descendants would still rule in state, were ever more perfectly persuaded that history culminated in their realm to endure forever, than is a thorough John Bull of the absolute permanence of the English system. Greece faded; but then Greece was "heathen," whereas England sustains several dozen of foreign missions. Rome vanished; but Rome was "corrupt,"*—meaning that stronger races grew up around

* Corruption of morals is the cause generally assigned in explanation of the downfall of Rome. So far is this from being a well-founded theory, that I believe that during the later ages the majority of the Roman people steadily progressed in morality. Had not this been the case, they would never have accepted Christianity. Certain it is that the Etruscan predecessors of the Romans, and others of whom they were virtually the continuation, were, like the Shemitic races of the Mediterranean with whom they maintained an active traffic, debauched to a degree unknown under the Cæsars. Rome was avowedly settled by malefactors whose first act was to carry off by main force the wives and daughters of their neighbors; and it is not probable that a state founded by such people, in such an age, was distinguished by purity of manners, tradition and poetry to the contrary notwithstanding.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1864, by C. B. RICHARDSON, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE

AND

NOTES ON NEW BOOKS.

FROM Messrs. Mason Brothers, of New York, we have received a new work, "The Life of Benjamin Franklin," which will create some stir in the American world. Mr. James Parton, whose "Life of Andrew Jackson" opened the eyes of men, and presented them a true portrait of one who had been until then a mythic hero, has now essayed to blow away the mists of almost superstitious reverence which had settled upon the historic statue of Franklin, and give us one of the greatest of the fathers of the Republic "in his habit as he lived." He has subjected the great American sage to the severest scrutiny of historic research, without exaggeration and without extenuation, and the result is calm, truthful, dispassionate eulogy. The details are copious and extremely interesting, and the author has the happy faculty of so connecting the past with the present, so illustrating parties, communities, individual men, of a former generation, by the idols of the tribe and den, the forum and the theatre, in our own day, that we see his men not "as trees, walking," but full of vitality and individual identity, as though they were quaint figures met and conversed with, in bright sunshine, in our streets or our parlors.

There are three handsome engraved portraits of Franklin, at different periods of his life, and one of Mrs. Sarah Bache, his daughter. This book will have, as it deserves, a very large sale. 2 vols. 8vo, 628, 707 pp.

From the same house we have a new edition of "The Life and Times of Aaron Burr, Lieutenant-Colonel in the Army of the Revolution, United States Senator, Vice-President of the United States, &c. By James Parton."

The former issue was largely read, and variously criticized. It contained many and interesting details, and supplied what really did not before exist,—a biography of the great traitor, since then so signally eclipsed in his evil fame. By many it was regarded as too exculpatory: Burr's crimes were so numerous and so manifest; an infidel, a libertine, a red-handed duellist, and, to cap the climax, an unsuccessful, an impeached, a fugitive traitor, he seems, like Byron's Corsair, to present a character

"Linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes."

The one virtue was his love for Theodosia: what else was there to commend him? Mr. Parton, who generally strives successfully against hero-worship even when he is setting up the statue, has here been surprised into partisanship, and is, in our judgment, too lenient with Burr. The original work was in one volume; the present issue—which is enlarged, and contains many appendices, with much new and interesting information, is in two handsome octavo volumes, of about 425 pages each, and is enriched with portraits of Burr and Theodosia.

"Illustrations of Universal Progress, by Herbert Spencer," has been published by Appleton, of New York.

Herbert Spencer is just beginning to be known in this country as one of the strongest thinkers of the English school of positive science. We say English, since he differs in many features from the theories of Comte. He holds,

however, the same fundamental position of the impossibility of any argument "from phenomena to noumena." The present essays will exhibit in a more popular way the whole system which he has developed in his larger works. We call attention especially to the first essay on Progress, and that on the Genesis of Science, as stating the law of Evolution, which he claims to have applied as the key of all philosophy, whether of nature or soul. We see in him great power of generalization, and many keen observations in every sphere of natural and social science. Few writers deal more trenchant blows at the "mechanical God" of a Paley. Few see more shrewdly the absurdities of a cloudy metaphysics or a shadow-religion. But we utterly disagree with him in his first principles of philosophic reasoning. We can see in his Law of Evolution an ingenious generalization; but when it becomes the first and last formula of truth, it simply ends in a material pantheism. Science may demolish the "watchmaking" Creator of our popular natural theology, and laugh as it will at some interpreters of the Mosaic Cosmogony; we yield willingly to its sober inductions; but we cannot yield the truth of a Personal and Living God to the "unknown mystery" of Herbert Spencer,—a God who is only a nebular hypothesis, the primary principle of a diffused matter, a homogeneous force passing into the heterogeneous, an inflammable medium, an electric fluid, a gas, or an eternal World-Egg.

From Captain Henry A. Wise, of the Navy, we have received, in a large octavo volume, the "Report of the Secretary of the Navy in Relation to Armored Vessels." It is a work of very great interest and value. Briefly presenting, in an Introductory, the principles of their construction, their cost and relative claims, we have then all the correspondence bearing upon their services in the North and South Atlantic Squadrons, the West Gulf and the Mississippi Squadrons, and, in the form of miscellaneous reports at the close, the opinions of experienced officers and other experts upon their merits. Such a correspondence ranges over the entire period and theatre of the war, and offers the fullest and most correct account we have seen of the glorious feats of our navy from the beginning. Among the topics of intense interest we find the great naval action in Hampton Roads, the detailed circumstances attending Admiral Dupont's attacks upon Charleston, the engagements at Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Island No. 10, the Expeditions up the Yazoo, the co-operation of the Navy at Vicksburg, and all the minor movements of the iron-clad. Interesting as this collated correspondence now is, it is most valuable as an important contribution to future history, and is one of those volumes which the historian will grasp as authentic amidst the thousand-colored narratives which are only like epics in that the imagination has greatly distorted the truth. We regret again that such valuable volumes, from the Government Printing Office, should be so ill printed. The Government should extend "the freedom of the press" in this particular. 607 pp.

The late Mr. Henry D. Thoreau, who presented to the world his naturalizing experiences in "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers," "Excursions," &c., is now posthumously offered by his publishers, Messrs. Ticknor & Fields, of Boston, in a series of essays, entitled "The Maine Woods." The essays are three: *Ktaadn* (or what the uninitiated write Katahdin), *Chesuncook*, and *The Allegash and East Branch*. They are records of his own adventures in Maine, which are pleasantly told, in good vigorous English, but not without a dash of that vainglory which makes the French soldier write, *nous autres hussards*. The details, which we have seen stated as an objection, constitute to us the chief charm. This little volume is indeed a Murray's Hand-Book, with no apparent pedantry; and many an adventurous searcher

for summer pleasure will pack his kit according to Mr. Thoreau's directions, and carry "The Maine Woods" in his hands as a guide to his feet.

"Libby Life: Experiences of a Prisoner of War in Richmond, Virginia, 1863-64." By Lieutenant-Colonel F. F. Cavada, U. S. Vols. Philadelphia, 1864.

This volume, containing the experiences of Lieutenant-Colonel Cavada, who was taken prisoner at Gettysburg, would at once commend itself to public favor by the very interest of the subject, even though the narrative were related by one who had had less experience in authorship.

Besides the recommendation of the subject, a good and flowing narrative, and the internal evidence of its faithfulness, it has the advantage of the endorsement of about six hundred officers who were the fellow-prisoners of our author and who have asked for its publication.

The volume opens with the morning of July 8, 1863, when a straggling column of Federal prisoners captured during the preceding day on the battle-field of Gettysburg was marching on the Chambersburg road to the rear of the rebel lines, with the early dawn of which day these prisoners had seen General Lee pushing for the front, on the eve of the commencement of the day's work which resulted in the final and disastrous repulse of the rebels, and consigned Gettysburg to history and left the fruits of victory with us. We are carried through the long and severe marches which these prisoners took through the Valley of Virginia until they finally reached Staunton on the 18th of July, on the evening of which day they were landed at the Virginia Central Railroad depot in Richmond, and consigned to the dismal walls of Libby Prison.

Then follows an easy, interesting, and pleasantly told narrative of the daily life of the prison, connected by means of a chronological thread serving to give unity and form to the whole. Thus are we carried from midsummer through the autumn and winter down to the month of March, 1864.

Among the most salient of its points is the very particular account which is given of the mining operations of Colonel Rose, Seventy-Seventh Pennsylvania Volunteers, which resulted in the escape of so many officers from the prison. This narrative is accompanied and illustrated by drawings of the implements and tunnel, a plan of the prison-walls which were undermined, and the street into which the exit was made. The illustrations, of which there are a number, are good; the book is printed very neatly, on fine paper, and is, altogether, presented in admirable style.

The "*Journal des Sciences Militaires des Armées de Terre et de Mer*" for March contains an interesting paper on "Armored Ships" (*Navires Cuirassés*) in England, translated from the "Times," which we shall make the basis of a future paper. There is also one of an admirable series of articles, entitled "*La France devant les deux Invasions, 1814-1815*," from official and unedited documents. This period is one of the most romantically interesting in the history of Napoleon, and such documents as form the basis of the narrative here given throw new light upon those ever-memorable battles in which, with a handful of men, the *débris* of his former army, Napoleon struck lightning blows at Blucher and Schwartzenburg, and maintained an unequal contest with the most brilliant success. "*C'était*," says Marmont, who shared the glory, "*le chant du cygne*."

Among the *Nouvelles Militaires* this journal gives a translation of Jefferson Davis's address to the rebel army, with such references to our own affairs as show a Southern sympathy.

"*Le Spectateur Militaire*" of April 15 contains some excellent articles of timely interest. The "Narrative of the Military Events in Denmark" is very