

THE
WESTMINSTER REVIEW.

No. CLXXXIII.

FOR JANUARY, 1870.

Roman Commonwealth" has no doubt, but of whose self-regarding views and unscrupulous despotism, he is equally convinced. The period of Cæsar's career, comprised in the third volume of this valuable work, dates from the prætorship of the great dictator, B.C. 62, to his consulship, B.C. 59. Among the questions that Mr. Long discusses is the merit or demerit of Cæsar's Agrarian Law, which he condemns utterly, regarding it as a mere device for winning popularity, and as a mistake in political and social economy. If Mr. Long's discussion challenges cross-examination, in its turn, the fact that he has discussed the proposed measure, is highly creditable to him. It is characteristic indeed of Mr. Long's historical spirit, that he always prepares the way for his narrative by a preliminary disquisition if necessary. Thus, in considering the charges against Catilina, he weighs the evidence placed before us by Cicero, whose inconsistency and virulent random invective he exposes, and by Sallust, on whose incapacity for writing history he has some appropriate remarks. The third volume of Mr. Long's work begins with the Mithridatic War, B.C. 78; then follows the story of the Servile Insurrection under Spartacus, on which the author observes, "there is no record of any man ever contemplating the extinction of slavery, which was devouring Italy, unless it may be that the reforms of the Gracchi were intended indirectly to bring about this result." In the fourth chapter Mr. Long examines the character of Cicero's orations against Verres, and while condemning the conduct of that governor, denounces the misdemeanours of the provincial rulers in general, declaring that most Romans viewed the provinces as places in which they might repair their broken fortunes or add to their exorbitant wealth. The war with the pirates and the siege of Jerusalem by Pompeius are among the remaining topics treated in this volume. For a careful revision of the greater part of it, implying a critical investigation of authorities, Mr. Long and his readers are indebted to the Rev. J. H. Backhouse, of Felstead Grammar School, in Essex.

The views of conservative half-and-half theorists of the progressive school, or of narrow-minded but complete theorists of the retrograde school, like two of the writers noticed above, form a curious contrast to the bold speculations of such a man as Mr. Francis Galton. In his daring and suggestive inquiry into the laws and consequences of Hereditary Genius, he carries us away from the private rills and rivulets of ordinary theory into the broad flood of oceanic historical speculation. The volume before us is an elaborated form of some papers published four years ago in *Macmillan's Magazine*—papers which, says the author, comparatively imperfect as they were, were sufficiently convincing to earn the acceptance of Mr. Darwin. The immediate object of the volume is to show—1. That a man's

natural abilities are derived from inheritance under exactly the same limitations as are the form and physical features of the whole organic world. 2. That it is as practicable to produce a highly-gifted race of men by judicious marriages, during consecutive generations, as to obtain by careful selection a permanent breed of dogs or horses endowed with any given quality. 3. That at the present moment there are certain social agencies working towards the degradation of human nature, and others working towards its improvement; and 4, as the necessary conclusion, That it is the duty of each generation to investigate and exercise the range of power which it possesses for the amelioration of its kind, in a way that, without being unwise to ourselves, shall be most advantageous to future inhabitants of the earth. To obtain the preliminary data for the establishment of these remarkable, though not absolutely novel propositions, Mr. Galton has made an examination into the kindred of about four hundred illustrious men of all periods of history, has inspected many pages of biographical dictionaries and volumes of memoirs, and has instituted various minute inquiries into different aspects of the subject. The first to treat the topic in a statistical manner, to arrive at numerical results, and to introduce the law of deviation from an average into discussions on heredity, Mr. Galton has a special claim on the thoughtful attention of his readers, even though his book should be found occasionally inaccurate or deficient. He subdivides his material into sections of classification, according to reputation or natural endowments, making a comparison of the two classifications; and after explaining his system of notation, he endeavours to track the operation of the principle for which he contends along lines of descent or ramifications of natural relationship, in the families of judges, statesmen, peers, commanders, literary and scientific men, poets, musicians, painters, divines, scholars, and athletes, with, as appears to us, a preponderance of affirmative or favourable exemplification. The instances in which a plurality of capable descendants or kinsmen are found in the same family are too numerous and too marked to allow of any other explanation than that on which Mr. Galton insists, though in some few instances the evidence adduced is not so full or so relevant as could be wished. Among the names that have been rendered conspicuous by more than one member of the family may be enumerated those of Scipio, Seneca, Pliny, Herschel, Humboldt, Wollaston, Cecil, Bacon, North, Walpole, Napier, Fox, Pitt, Hallam, Coleridge, Wellesley, Sheridan, Mill, D'Israeli, De Witt, Colbert, Mirabeau, Bonaparte. Out of 286 judges, more than one in every nine have been either father, son, or brother to another judge; and the other high legal relationships have been even more numerous. From the consideration of personal affinities Mr. Galton passes to an estimate of the comparative worth of different races. The average intellectual standard of the negro race he places two grades below our own; the Australian type one grade below the African negro; the

⁷ "Hereditary Genius: an Inquiry into its Laws and Consequences." By Francis Galton, F.R.S., &c. London: Macmillan & Co. 1869.

most capable constituent of the most capable race of the old world, the people of Attica, two grades higher than ourselves. The Northern English and Lowland Scotch are a fraction superior to our ordinary countrymen; while the mass of men and women in great towns constitute an overworked and degenerate stock. In a suggestive discussion, Mr. Galton points the moral included in his premises:—"The needs of civilization, communication, and culture, call for more brains and mental stamina than the average of our race possess; that our race is over-weighted and oppressed by demands that exceed its powers. The old ancestral tendency to restlessness and intermittence of action is gradually dying out. Modern leading men do not belong as a rule to the once famous Norman type, but are of a coarser and more robust breed." Reviewing the influences that affect the natural ability of nations, Mr. Galton undertakes to estimate the effect of the average age of marriage on the growth of any section of a nation, and argues, that to improve the breed our wisest policy would be to retard the average age of marriage among the weak, and accelerate it among the strong. Against Malthusianism, as a *present* rule of conduct, he protests as encouraging the multiplication of the incompetent, and discouraging that of the race best fitted to invent and conform to a high and generous civilization. Similarly Mr. Galton condemns the enforcement of celibacy by the Church in the past, as tending to produce ferocious and stupid natures. Whether, in the case of Malthusianism, the result deprecated by Mr. Galton would be inevitable, and whether the celibate life of the old Church had not compensating or counteracting accompaniments, are questions that might very well be raised. However this may be, Mr. Galton's clear vigorous statement of the argument which he sustains and the course which he advocates, his stately illustrations, his suggestion of a derivation of mathematical formulæ from the doctrine of Pangenesis, and the general ability and originality of his treatise, make it a worthy contribution to the discussion on Natural Selection, which Mr. Darwin so magnificently inaugurated and so intrepidly continues.

The race whose ultimate deposition Mr. Galton predicts, was in the full enjoyment of its glorious vitality when, eight hundred years ago, in the field of Senlac, the old Teutonic tactics were matched against the arts and valour of the Norman invaders. The story of the conquest is related by Mr. Freeman* in the third volume of his book, as it has never been related before. Over great part of this volume indeed there rests an epical splendour, worthy of the arms and of the man whom he sings. The preparation for the invasion, the felling of ships, the muster of the adventurous band,

the sail of the fleet with the blazing lantern, the blaring trumpet, the ducal ship alone at dawn of day, and the sailor climbing the topmast to see if any of the other vessels were in sight; the march, the Norman and Saxon camps, the messages, the attack, the exploits of William, the hand-to-hand fight at the barricades. The success of Harold when "the shield-wall was still unbroken, and the Dragon of Wessex still soared unconquered over the hill of Senlac," William's stratagem—the pretended flight—the fatal pursuit, the close combat, the vertical shower of arrows; and when the bolt from heaven had pierced the king's right eye, the fall of the standard of the "Fighting Man," and the close of the martial tragedy in death, defeat, and loss of empire—all the circumstance, in short, that glorifies or explains the memorable appeal to arms that followed the landing on St. Michael's Eve, is reflected with a truth, a brilliance, and a reality, in Mr. Freeman's narrative, which seems, as by an act of enchantment, to transport us back into the remote past, or to bring that past in visible embodiment before us. The volume itself opens with an account of the sickness and death of Edward, which is succeeded by a narrative of the election and coronation of Harold and the early incidents of his brief reign. The second chapter has for its subject the later reign of William in Normandy, his marriage with Matilda, his wars with France, the conquest of Maine, and Harold's visit at Rouen, with his share in the war against Brittany, and his oath and homage to William. The thirteenth chapter of the History sets forth all the negotiations of Duke William; the fourteenth describes the Norwegian invasion and the campaign of Stamfordbridge; the fifteenth conducts us through the campaign of Hastings to the fall and burial of Harold, and the sixteenth closes with the interregnum, and consecration of William. In an appendix of rather more than two hundred pages many important topics are discussed in detail, as the authority of the Bayeux tapestry, which Mr. Freeman regards as a contemporary work made for Bishop Odo and the church of Bayeux; Edward's bequest; the oath and the election of Harold; William's marriage; the details of the battle of Stamfordbridge, and more than thirty other distinct topics. The three valuable maps illustrating the scene of Harold's victory over the Northmen, the voyage and campaign of William, and the battle of Senlac, must not be forgotten in enumerating the merits of the book. Space will not allow us to enter on a detailed criticism of the history before us; but there are some points, not all necessarily of disagreement, on which we desire to touch. Mr. Freeman holds that Harold, as king by the national will, was a more lawful king than any that ever reigned over England. His true title to the crown was his election by the Witan, and it is undeniable that the chief men of all England are said to have concurred in the choice. Northumberland, however, Mr. Freeman allows, was never fairly represented, and the Northumbrians, though ultimately persuaded into acquiescence,

* "The History of the Norman Conquest of England: its Causes and its Results." By Edward A. Freeman, M.A., late Fellow of Trinity College. Vol. III. The Reign of Harold and the Interregnum. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press. 1866.