

CURRENT LITERATURE.

Histories. THE *Second Division of the History of the People of Israel* (1) contains what M. Rénan considers the most important part of the history of Judaism; and the reason for this opinion is thus expressed in the preface—"Jahveh, the national God of the Jews, undergoes therein a complete transformation. From a local and provincial God he becomes, through a kind of return to the old patriarchal Elohim, the Creator of Heaven and Earth. He becomes, above all things, a just God, which national gods, necessarily full of partiality towards their *clientèle*, never are. The introduction of morality into religion becomes an accomplished fact." The treatise bears marks of a learned man, as we should expect; but his learning is used for the purpose of showing how "small and local" Judaism was, and, by inference, Christianity is. The book is written in a lively style, which is in its way attractive; though it is cynical beyond measure, and oftentimes shocking by its irreverence. David is made out to be a very poor creature at the best, no better than Abd-el-Kader; and we have a picture of him drawn from M. Rénan's inner consciousness which is as ridiculous as it is imaginary. Indeed, it never seems to strike M. Rénan that he can possibly be wrong; and he thinks himself justified in sitting on the eminence his conceit has piled up, and sneering at Elijah and Elisha, or at God Himself. One thing we suppose we must thank M. Rénan for, and that is, that he allows us to retain our belief in the sequence of events which the sacred record gives us. But of course we quite expect he will gird at prophetism, or at any thing else which people like to cherish as matters of faith. M. Rénan's notion that one account of the Creation is the product of the northern half of the kingdom of Israel, and the other of the southern part, is simply fanciful; and when he tells us that the Ten Commandments were written by some obscure scribe in a chamber at Jerusalem he asks us to believe a greater miracle than that of Mount Horeb. When one thinks how small and unimportant M. Rénan tries to make out Judaism to be, the wonder is that so great a man