

the native races of the Pacific States, and it embraces all the inhabitants of the region to the west of the Mississippi from the Arctic Sea to the Isthmus of Panama. His aim, as he tells us in his preface, is not so much to write history as to provide materials out of which it may be eventually written by others. With infinite trouble he has brought the ore to the surface, and piled it up in full faith that it will undergo eventually those processes by which the dross is purged away, and pass current as the bright metal of history. His aim is modest, and implies true nobility of mind.

The book is remarkable in many ways. Its author, a bookseller in San Francisco, when he set himself to his work in 1859, found that the necessary books and manuscripts existed in no library in the world, and he therefore began with characteristic energy to secure everything within his reach in America. He then spent two years in obtaining all available materials in Europe, being singularly favoured by fortune in his enterprise. On the dispersal of the library of the unfortunate Emperor Maximilian, he obtained three thousand volumes; in 1869 his library had developed into sixteen thousand books, manuscripts, and pamphlets, irrespective of maps and newspapers, in English, French, German, Spanish, Latin, and Mexican; and he soon discovered that the materials for history which he sought 'were so copiously diluted with trash, that it would be impossible to follow his different subjects in the manner in which he proposed with but one lifetime to devote to the work.' In this emergency he devised a system of indexing the facts in such a manner that all the authorities could be brought to bear on any given point. This was done by employing a large staff of assistants to read the books and write down references on little cards labelled according to the subject. When we visited him in San Francisco, in 1875, we saw the work in full operation, and were struck with astonishment at the 'fact-catalogue' of the library, which consisted of packs of cards, each under its own heading, and each giving a bird's eye view of the whole subject with the necessary references. In this manner Mr. Bancroft has collected materials which would have taken one man, so he tells us, about sixty years to bring together, and these he has used in the books before us, which are remarkable not merely for the vast number of facts which are recorded, but for the singular manner in which they have been collected together by the indomitable perseverance of one man. From his method of work it was impossible that dross should not be mingled with the ore, but this can easily be removed by the hot fire of