

than any of the rest, a glimpse of the hero himself, whose monument surmounts the heights and overlooks the place where he fell. To the reader who takes the story up for the first time, we commend especially the intelligent literary criticisms in it, the splendid description of the Falls, and the graphic, yet concise, account of the battle of Queenston. Above all there is a healthy tone of morality and a warm, though not obtrusive vein of practical pity, which ought to secure for it a wide circle of readers, apart from merits of a purely æsthetic character.

A HISTORY OF AMERICAN CURRENCY. By Wm. G. Sumner. New York: Holt & Co. Toronto: Adam, Stevenson & Co.

Of all branches of political economy, the currency question is, in some respects, best adapted for inductive treatment; and a history of the currency of any nation, if it embraces the various phases of paper money, is sure to be full of practical lessons for the guidance of the present and future generations. The history of the continental paper money, which in the end became worthless, should have been a warning against the repetition of so ruinous an experiment. But the particular facts are in time forgotten; and the popular ignorance of general principles makes it easy to repeat an experiment which had before led to nothing but disorder. When the first issues of irredeemable paper are made, the belief is generally entertained that it will be possible to keep them within bounds; and attempts to limit the amount are made, without success, from time to time. In the end the continental paper money becomes worthless. But there was then an excuse for resorting to financial expedients, even somewhat desperate in their character, in the fact that the Congress of the Confederation did not possess the power of taxation; but it ought to have been foreseen that evidences of indebtedness issued by a legislative body which was denied the means of making its promises good, must be valueless. People would not consent to be taxed when it was so much easier to send to the printing-office and get a cart-load of paper money. And so low was the popular intelligence that there was only one man in Congress who foresaw the danger of the alternative adopted. At the present time, there is scarcely less need for a book like this in which sound principles on the currency question are inculcated; which are not set up as theories, but come as inductions from facts, showing the widespread ruin caused by paper money. In the present

day the Inflationists, in and out of Congress, are numerous and powerful; and they have hitherto been able to prevent any serious attempt to return to specie payments. They are continually clamouring for more currency; and if they got all they ask for now, they would only have to wait till the additional currency had been absorbed by a further inflation of prices and an additional excess of credit, which would be sure to follow, to find things practically in the same condition they were before, and we should then find them clamouring for still further additions to the currency. If the demand were submitted to, there would be no point at which it would be possible to stop. A man might, in the words of Mr. Sumner, "as well jump off a precipice intending to stop half way down." Inflation now could not but mean repudiation to-morrow. Mr. Sumner's work is emphatically a need of the times; and if it sets men to thinking on the past, it may save a world of trouble, disaster and ruin in the future.

THE EXPANSE OF HEAVEN: A Series of Essays on the Wonders of the Firmament. By R. A. Proctor, B.A. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1874.

Mr. Proctor has added another to his already long list of works on astronomy—the noblest, and in many respects the most profoundly interesting of all the sciences. Mr. Proctor's great merits as a popular expositor of his favourite subject are so familiar to the reading public, that it is a work of supererogation on our part to dilate upon them. He has the happy knack of imparting the maximum of actual knowledge with the minimum of mere technical detail. His success in this direction is mainly owing to his surprising facility in illustrating abstruse and complex scientific facts by means of familiar similes and every-day analogies, combined with an almost unrivalled clearness of style, and a diction that is both simple and at the same time highly poetic. Nor does he lose anything by his unaffected manifestation of a deep religiosity and profound feeling of reverence everywhere pervading his treatment of this most sublime of sciences. The present work may be regarded as a collection of popular essays upon the more striking celestial phenomena, the mere enumeration of which would lead us too far on the present occasion. We can only say that Mr. Proctor has lost none of his ancient fire, and his latest production shows no falling off in those qualities which, in the lapse of a very few years, have raised him to the first rank of living astronomers.