

vealed to him, seemed so fair that he aspired not only to cover the surface, but to master the details. That expectation he sorrowfully abandons. Perhaps, too, he thinks, he may have to console himself with the mere honour of vindicating the new principles of historical writing, leaving their application to the maturer studies of succeeding generations. This last thought foreshadowed his fate, for he died at an early age while travelling in Palestine. His enemies scoffed at the inveterate doubter's journey to the Holy Places; but he had more of the spirit of the Crusaders than they would fain allow. The energy and the chivalrous love of combat that led so many to die near the same spot burned in him too, and that deep faith which would seem, at first sight, to be wanting in his character, really drove him onwards with an overwhelming influence; but the object of that faith was not religious dogma, it was directed towards the reign of harmony and law in the affairs of men no less than in the inorganic world of chemistry. This belief was his creed, it edged his blade and nerved his arm, and to it he paid a devotion as sincere as ever Our Lady of Succours received from belted knight or monk of the order of Jesus.

The principles which Buckle conceived he had demonstrated may be shortly stated as follows:—Physical agents, such as climate, food, and soil, exercise an influence over the accumulation and distribution of wealth. A more intangible influence is exercised by the general aspect of nature, its earthquakes, tempests, pestilences and famines, upon the understanding and imagination of mankind, but this latter influence has not been powerful enough in most European countries to develop the imagination to that morbid extent which was attained in many of the extra-European civilisations. I will pause here for a moment to remark that much criticism has been

directed with the view of ridiculing the idea that the aspect of nature is a factor in the formation of national character. It would occupy too much space to go into this controversy at length, but I will give two instances which occur to me at the moment in which men of widely differing views, and neither of whom were in any way disciples of Buckle, have, unconsciously perhaps, ratified and illustrated his conclusions on this head. The first is M. Taine, who has devoted much of the opening part of his "History of English Literature" to the enunciation of the theory that our national poetry and prose owes much of its present form to the peculiar climate and scenery among which our early poets found themselves. Their damp, cloudy skies, their lush water meadows, heavy with dew, their deep forests full of a perpetually green vegetation, almost sodden with moisture,—the short, joyous English summer, the long, dreary English winter,—provocative of love for home and fireside pleasures, the effects of all these M. Taine thinks can be detected even in our modern poetry. Clearly he thinks the aspects of nature have done much to make us what we are now. The other authority I will quote is Lord Beaconsfield, who, in a speech delivered in Parliament during the debates on the Irish Church question, in alluding to the mental and moral peculiarities of the Irish as a people, accounted for some of them by the fact that Ireland was surrounded by a "melancholy ocean." This was not argument, but merely one of his Lordship's happy epithets; we may however see from the fact of his using it how deeply rooted is the notion that our local surroundings *do* tell upon us. If I were to trace this thought through general literature and show how Wordsworth has sung of one who lived near a waterfall, that

"Beauty born of murmuring sound did pass into her face,"