

MODERN SINS IN AN ANCIENT MIRROR,

—warnings we all do well to study.¹ Mr. Smith ascribes these pieces (chaps. ii.-iv.) to the stage of Isaiah's "apprenticeship," and supposes that in them "we have the obscure and tortuous path of a conviction struggling to light in the prophet's own experience," in this way explaining what he conceives to be their "obscurities and inconsistencies" (pp. 34-36). This patronising style of interpreting the great Isaiah may sit gracefully enough on "that modern Rabshakeh, Ernest Rénan" (p. 350),² but in the present volume we submit it is a little out of place. We shall recur to the point again. The splendid poem which constitutes the vestibule to the whole book (chap. i.)—called by Ewald "The Great Arraignment"—may belong to a later date, though we see no insuperable obstacle to its being placed in the reign of Ahaz during the invasions referred to in 2 Chron. xxviii. 5, 17-19. For this is the next stage in the advance. Under the feeble, dilettante Ahaz—a mere puppet in the hands of those who pulled the strings in the harem and the court (iii. 12), obstinate only in wickedness—the prosperity of the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham vanished like a dream. The surrounding tribes threw off their allegiance, and swooped down in turn like birds of prey on the kingdom that had ruled them. Specially formidable was the confederacy of Rezin of Damascus and Pekah king of Israel, which had for its express object to dethrone Ahaz, and set up a king of their own, a certain "son of Tabeel" in his stead, and which furnished the occasion of

¹ Finely incisive is Mr. Smith's remark—"It is with remarkable persistence that in every civilisation the two main passions of the human heart, love of wealth and love of pleasure, the instinct to gather and the instinct to squander, have sought precisely these two forms denounced by Isaiah on which to work their social havoc, appropriation of the soil and indulgence in strong drink. Every civilised community develops sooner or later its land-question and its liquor-question" (p. 41).

² Cf. Rénan's *History of Israel* (Eng. trans.), ii. p. 411, &c.