

we cannot but regret that Mr. Jarvis pitched upon the East as the field for his holiday disportings, and that, when he came so suddenly to the determination to accompany his American friends to Egypt and Syria, he went in so exuberant a mood, and in such company. The effect of this is traceable all through the book. We not only find our traveller working off his superabundant vitality in originating all sorts of humorisms, which disfigure the narrative, but doing so after the questionable models of Mark Twain and his own *compagnon de voyage*, Jimmy, whom we are informed "lives out West." What, for instance, can be more repugnant to the feelings of every reader of these letters than the irreverent manner in which the beautiful "Hymn of the Nativity" is introduced on pages 97-98, and the levity with which reference is made to the "adorned grottoes" to be found at all points of sacred interest in Palestine, and which culminates in representing the Shepherds at the nativity as gathered round a fire in one of these caves at Bethlehem "having a quiet rubber."

There are repeated instances in the volume of similar violations of propriety and good taste, but they seem to be more the product of thoughtlessness, and of a demonstrativeness of manner which even the rain-storms and the discomforts experienced during the author's sojourn in Syria could not repress, than of any warp in his moral nature. There are nevertheless, many passages, even of beauty, expressive of a devout feeling and sympathy with the scenes visited, which partially atone for these offences; such, for instance, as the one describing "a Sunday in Jerusalem and service on Mount Zion," at pages 75-76.

The limitation of space forbids our making any selection from the volume, or extending our remarks further; but we may add that we shall not be sorry to renew our acquaintance with the author; though we should recommend the rough untrodden ground of our great North-West as the scene of his future explorations, or any land not so sacred to Christendom as the one he writes of in the present volume, and of which a Ritter, a Robinson, a Tristram, and a Farrar, have been the eloquent and devout historians.

From the department of the Clerk of Routine and Records we have always received the courtesy of being placed in possession of the numerous documents which Government has, in its wisdom, deemed necessary to issue for the information of the country, and the publication of which is considered one of the inalienable privileges of Parliament. We need hardly say that we refer to those national registers of information and culture—the *Blue Books*. Hitherto we may have been heard to speak not altogether respectfully of these monuments of enterprise in figures; but we have found, of late, that

they, too, illustrate the development theory, and, through the agency of natural selection, are subject to improvements in race and breed, as they pass through the hands or brains of the *genius* Civil Service.

Recognising the influences to which we have alluded, as having given increased value to the species, and having derived some pleasure from the perusal of several specimens recently to hand, we hasten to make acknowledgment of the fact, and, in some degree, to atone for the scant justice we have hitherto done this branch of literature. It might be invidious, after this confession, to indicate the particular Report that has brought us to a juster sense of the value of these multitudinous treatises. We shall not, therefore, indicate this more precisely than by saying that we have had the satisfaction of examining the 3rd volume of *The Census of 1871*, just to hand; of consulting the Report on the state of the Militia for 1874; and of looking over the interesting documents emanating from the Departments of the Interior and of Marine and Fisheries. We do not wish to be understood as eulogising Blue Books in the mass, or of commending the study of their facts and figures as aids to any high culture. Nor can we quite comprehend the bent of mind which can place itself in that intense and absolute relation to the world of facts stored in their pages, which characterizes the Annalist and Statistician. Still we are free to say that if Blue Books are not attractive reading, they have some reason for complaint if their uses are not fully recognised, and their value duly appreciated. Where shall we look for incidents more impressive, for lessons more emphatic, and for utterances more prompt and conclusive, than are to be found in the pages of a Blue Book? To parody Jefferson's words with reference to newspapers, one might safely say: "If I had to choose between a Government without Blue Books, and Blue Books without a Government, I should prefer the latter." After what we have said, we should consider it would be treating the subject with too much levity, if we asked whether the public has any intelligent apprehension of how much is annually spent in Ottawa on this interesting species of literature. It is not the least remarkable feature in the economy of Blue Books, nor the least signal feature of their triumph, that they possess immunity from all criticism, and that their circulation is independent of any popular caprice.

We have a further acknowledgment to make in a department of industry somewhat akin to the one above referred to—except that the service is rendered by private labour and enterprise. We allude to Mr. Morgan's new issue of the "*Parliamentary Companion*," a compilation which each year increases in interest and usefulness, and correspondingly enlarges its claims upon the gratitude of the public.