

CURRENT LITERATURE.

MR. SPEDDING continues in this month's *Contemporary* his criticism of Macaulay's Essay on Bacon. This instalment seems to us a triumphant vindication of the great Chancellor. His dealings with his uncle, the great Burghley, are traced with a minuteness we are unable to follow. So far as Essex is concerned, he was evidently a spoiled child, petted and pouted at in turns by the Queen. Bacon was his mentor, so long as he remained amenable to any advice or remonstrance, but the time came when even Bacon could not manage him. His foolish conduct in Ireland and his still more foolish attempt at rebellion are clearly set forth in this paper. No exertions on the part of the philosopher could have been of any avail. Bacon lost favour with the Queen on his account, admonished him and struggled with him in vain; indeed, so far did his friendship lead him that the throne was for a time in danger. Mr. Spedding exposes a number of errors and confusions of date and circumstance in Macaulay's rhetorical essay, and the paper, as a whole, deserves an attentive reading. Mr. Brassey follows with an answer to the question, "Has the British seaman deteriorated?" and his answer is in the negative. The evidence he adduces is somewhat conflicting; still it bears out, in the main, the writer's contention. Some valuable suggestions are offered for improving the seaman's *morale*, and a eulogy is passed upon Mr. Plimsoll.

Canon Lightfoot breaks silence, after a considerable interval, with his eighth paper on "Supernatural Religion." It deals with the Gallic Churches, and appears overpoweringly convincing. Of course, the chief reference here is to the testimony of Irenæus; and Pothinus, who was the senior of the Father and his predecessor in the bishopric of Lyons, is another link in the chain of testimony. That the Four Gospels and some of the Epistles as we now have them were recognised as canonical Scripture in the time of Irenæus, and were then universally received by the Church, can hardly be disputed after such a *résumé* of the evidence as we find in this paper.

Mr. Bayne's able monogram on Clarendon, is concluded in the current number. It is exceedingly interesting, especially that portion which embraces the period of his Chancel-

lorship; and yet it is not always satisfactory. The theory that Clarendon was acting a part when he burst into a frenzy when he heard of his daughter's marriage with the Duke of York, seems a strained and improbable solution of the problem. It is far more likely, as the *Spectator* remarks, that he was, for a short time, earnestly indignant. His notions of royal dignity were extremely high, and, besides, he had reason to tremble for himself when the Court and the politicians saw him likely to be the father of their kings to be. The affair of Fanny Stewart filled up the measure of his iniquities in the eyes of Charles. Clarendon, in that matter, acted perhaps with an eye to the main chance, but, on the whole, as an honest man should have acted. Readers of Pepys know well what the fate of the Stewart would have been but for her hasty marriage with the Duke of Richmond. Seven years after, Clarendon died in exile.

Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, the well-known founder of Secularism, treats, in a somewhat high-flown strain, of "A Dead Movement which learned to Live again." The dead movement is co-operation, and the paper is chiefly useful as a record of historical remembrances. Professor Campbell will rather startle the strictly orthodox with his third paper on New Testament Revision. Some of his remarks savour of Unitarianism, and he wields his sabre regardless of friend or foe. We give one specimen in the Professor's own words: "There is probably now hardly any clergyman of average scholarship who believes in the genuineness of the text of the three witnesses (1 John v. 7). Yet it should not be forgotten that, for two centuries and more, no clergyman could have questioned the authority of this verse without incurring the danger of being reputed a Socinian. This and some other facts about the Bible have passed out of the stage where it was said of them, 'They are not true,' into the other stage, in which the orthodox interpreter declares, 'Everybody knew them.' It is not quite well that these sudden conversions or revolutions of opinion should be passed over, like the changes in some men's political views, without the slightest reference being made to them afterwards. 'Let bygones be bygones' is not applicable to scientific questions." With this specimen brick from the ancient University of St.