

not merely the native races of the Pacific States, but also the Eskimos of the Arctic Sea, and the inhabitants of the British territories. It includes, as well, the history of Mexico and Central America.

The interest which Mr. Bancroft's book has for us does not lay so much with the rapidly vanishing savage tribes as with the evidence as to the origin of the American peoples, and of that extraordinary civilisation which was crushed in Mexico, Central America, and Peru under the heel of the ignorant and bigoted Spaniard. In discussing these points we shall use the materials collected together by Professor Wilson in his last edition of 'Prehistoric Man,' an admirable work, in which the history of the American tribes and civilisation lies hidden under a misleading title.

The first point which offers itself for examination is the vexed question of the origin of the American peoples:—

'The problem' (writes Mr. Bancroft) 'of the origin of the American aborigines is, in my opinion, enveloped in as much obscurity now as it ever was; and when I consider the close proximity of the north-western and north-eastern extremities of America to Asia and Europe; the unthought-of and fortuitous circumstances that may at any time have cast any people upon the American coasts; the mighty convulsions that may have changed the whole face of the earth during the uncounted years that man may have dwelt upon its surface; and lastly, the uncertainty, perhaps I might say improbability, of the descent of mankind from one pair; when I think of all these things it seems to me that the peopling of America may have been accomplished in so many ways that no more hopeless task could be conceived than the endeavour to discover the one particular manner of it.' (Vol. v. p. 6.)

We agree with Mr. Bancroft that it would be hopeless to ascertain the precise manner in which man first arrived in America, but we believe that the evidence as to the ancestry of the present tribes is as clear as such evidence could possibly be under the circumstances. In discussing this question, Mr. Bancroft is influenced by the view that man was created in several regions, and that America was one of the primeval centres of creation—a view which has met with greater favour in America than among the naturalists of Europe. The unity of the human race, that all mankind sprang from one pair, is to our mind as indisputable as the fact that all horses and cows sprang from a single pair; and when we consider that the main features traceable in the American races, the Eskimo excepted, are those of the Polynesians, of the Japanese, Chinese, and Samoides, the conclusion that they are of Asiatic extraction, held by Humboldt, Prescott, Tschudi, and Wilson,