

Intelligent, patriotic, and readable, these essays are well worth the reader's attention, and will add to his familiarity with many phases of our national history.

Symbolic Algebra, or the Algebra of Algebraic Numbers, Together with Critical Notes on the Methods of Reasoning Employed in Geometry. By Prof. William Cain, C. E., etc. [D. Van Nostrand. 50 cts.]

This little volume of 130 pages is No. 73 in Van Nostrand's Science Series. It may be of value to a certain class of mathematical students, who like or need amplification of the simpler parts of mathematics; but it is difficult for us to imagine a student knowing enough mathematics to read Prof. Cain's critical notes, and yet ignorant enough to need them. The first sixty pages are, for example, almost wholly occupied with showing that a negative number is not to be considered less than nothing; but as a number indicating a quantity to be measured in the opposite direction. Thus a man with assets of eight thousand, and debts of ten thousand, is not to be considered as possessed of two thousand less than nothing; but as owing two thousand more than he has means to pay. Very true; but every mathematical student in this quarter of the century, one would think, might see it without sixty pages of palaver.

Testing Machines, their History, Construction, and Use. By Arthur V. Abbott. [D. Van Nostrand. 50 cts.]

This is No. 74, in the same series in which "Symbolic Algebra" is No. 73, but is a book of a different character. Its 190 pages are crowded with facts, lucidly arranged and described; no one could fail to understand it; nor could any man be so familiar with the subject as to be uninterested in it. Mr. Abbott describes the modern methods of testing the strength of every form of material used in architecture, and in works of constructive engineering; gives tables of results obtained in regard to American materials; and makes many acute and valuable suggestions as to the use of such results, and the liabilities to error arising from variations in specimens, changes produced by time, new forms of strain, etc. Altogether the work, small as it is, will be of very great value to all architects, builders, and engineers of construction who consult it.

The Book of the Beginnings. By R. Heber Newton. [G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$1.00.]

The Rev. R. Heber Newton, who was asked by his bishop to discontinue his Sunday talks upon the Bible, yielded to the request, but reserved the right to appeal to a wider public through the press, and has now sent forth his volume on *The Book of the Beginnings*. Genesis is, of course, the special subject under treatment, but the first three chapters, including nearly half the book, discuss questions that concern the Pentateuch as a whole. The composite structure of the five books, their internal unity in matter and spirit, their threefold authorship, with a possibility of still other writers and revisers, takes up the first chapter of the three. The second exposes the objections to the tradi-

tional theory of a Mosaic authorship, drawn from the several fields of geography, history, archæology, and law. The third chapter traces the growth of the work as constructed by the new criticism, and the bearing of this later view upon the spiritual uses of the book for mankind. The remaining chapters analyze the contents of Genesis, considering successively the primeval sagas and the traditions of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. The volume makes no pretence to scientific thoroughness and detail, and is intended for popular readers who are not satisfied with traditional views of the Scriptures. The value of the opinions here presented, and the wisdom of expounding them before an audience without special familiarity with Biblical study, may be mooted questions, but we are glad to find less of a flippant tone and a hasty spirit than appeared in his earlier volume on *Right and Wrong Uses of the Bible*.

Short History of the Reformation. By John F. Hurst, D.D. [Harper & Brothers. 40c.]

In a small handbook of an hundred and twenty pages, the Rev. Dr. Hurst presents a concise and comprehensive summary of the Reformation era with its manifold aspects and relations and its influence upon all parts of Europe. In the Paris Reformers and the German mystics he sees the heralds of Protestantism, and he recognizes the important work of preparation wrought by the humanism of Italy and the Reformatory Councils. The effects of the mighty movement, too, he traces far beyond the bounds of Germany and Switzerland, not only in England, Scotland, and the Netherlands, but also through France, Spain, Italy, Scandinavia, and the Slavic lands. The closing chapter makes fit allusion to the four-hundredth anniversary of Luther's birth, and to the widespread commemoration of the event. Within so narrow compass there is room for nothing beyond the merest outline, but this little book opens to the beginner a broad bird's-eye view of the vast field, while even to more familiar eyes it gives a new idea of the unity in spirit and purpose that underlies the whole course of the Reformation.

Ballades and Verses Vain. By Andrew Lang. [Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.50.]

As a graceful favor both to a fellow-poet and to his readers, Mr. Austin Dobson has gathered, arranged, and introduced with verses of his own these *Ballades and Verses Vain* by Mr. Andrew Lang. Only variety in theme and differences in line and meter could keep the ballade-form from becoming monotonous, repeated through a series of thirty-six poems. To the credit of poet and of collector alike it must be said that no reader could find the present series monotonous. Beside the ballades and a dozen verses vain, Mr. Dobson has chosen for us a cluster of Homeric memories, a handful of sonnets, and a score of translations from various sources. Mr. Lang lacks something of Mr. Dobson's vigor and skill, but his lightness of touch, his occasional picturesqueness of style, and his frequent melody of tone, joined to a pervasive air of gentle pensiveness, give his verses a pleasant charm. Once or twice, too, he strikes a deeper vein, and in the noble lines on "The Shade of Helen" we find hints of unusual strength and a creative genius.

MINOR NOTICES.

Studies in History. By Henry Cabot Lodge [Houghton, Mifflin & Co. \$1.50.]

Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge, whose name finds honorable mention in our current politics, continues his patient study of the politics of the past. Of the essays contained in this volume, several lie in the line of his former work, and almost all are closely connected with American history, a field in which he has proved so careful and so constant a student. The first paper, "The Puritans and the Restoration," is perhaps the least satisfactory of all, failing utterly to account for the phenomenon on which it dwells, the decline of Puritan power and Puritan character in the age of Charles II. "A Puritan Pepys" is the felicitous title under which the ever-interesting diary of Sewall is discussed. "Colonialism in the United States" is a supplement to his *Short History of the English Colonies in America*, and touches upon certain distinctive features of our present life which go back to the colonial days for source and explanation. The essays upon Daniel Webster and Alexander Hamilton recall the able monographs which Mr. Lodge has contributed to the "American Statesmen" series. Two English publicists, Fox and Cobbett, with three early American leaders, Timothy Pickering, Albert Gallatin, and the less known Caleb Strong, make up the list of character studies, while the volume closes with an amusing and instructive contrast drawn between two French opinions of America, of M. de Bacourt and the Vicomte d'Haussonville, separated one from the other by forty years.