Literature.

[The prompt mention in our list of "Books of the Week" will be considered by us an equivalent to their publishers for all volumes received. The interests of our readers will guide us in the selection of works for further notice.]

THE CROKER PAPERS.*

THE interest we feel in the two solid volumes into which the Messrs. Scribner have compressed the English Edition of these valuable papers, is not that which has animated Mr. Jennings in publishing them. Aside from the anecdotal memorabilia they contain, and the bright glimpses of men the world will always count it a gain to know more of, their chief interest to us is their accurate representation of the English Tory during the Reform agitation of the Emancipation Act, and the Corn Laws together with their reflection of the Tory view of these measures which has lingered on into our own times.

The Right Hon. John Wilson Croker was born in 1780, the son of another John Croker, Surveyor-General of the Irish Customs and Excise. After a schooling at Portarlington and Cork, he entered Trinity College, Dublin, in his sixteenth year, where he knew Moore, the poet. In 1800 he became a student at Lincoln's Inn, and seven years later, entered Parliament. Sir Arthur Wellesley, when he took command in Portugal, left him in charge of part of the business of his office at home. In 1809 Mr. Perceval, on taking the head of the Ministry put him in the important and lucrative post he held for twenty-two years, as Secretary of the Admiralty. Once, at least, he was pressed to enter the Ministry, but declined on his Tory faith that a Minister should be of the nobility, though, when the Duke of Wellington came in, in 1828, he cared more to have a seat in His Majesty's Privy Council, to which he was sworn in and duly kissed the royal hand June 16th of that year.

All this is chiefly important as a basis for the long continued personal intimacy in which he lived to the day of his death with the whole Tory aristocracy, from the King down, and for the very accurate representative he grew to be of them, both in their strength and their weakness.

His notes, taken down at the time, and his correspondence, preserved with the methodical regularity of a man of business, make an immense collection, to which the whole Tory party contribute. It has every appearance of accuracy, due allowance having been made for strong partisan predispositions and the limitation of political prejudices; though it might also inspire the reader with caution to glance over the long list of palpable errors Macaulay discovered in Croker's edition of Boswell, and whose justice he acknowledges by correcting them in the later editions.

Of Mr. Croker's official administration, everything that has reached the public ear justifies the high praises bestowed on it by the editor, though the only item likely to interest Americans is that he seems to have been the author of the famous order in the War of 1814, requiring English frigates not to engage American frigates of the same class on equal terms, their superiority in guns and metal having been discovered.

As to his activity in other relations, we cannot take the same view as Mr. Jennings, but remain unconvinced. His representations are not in the *round*. They stop short with certain views and certain lights which answer his purpose well enough, but do not satisfy one who wishes to understand the subject. He falls into many inaccuracies—some minor, some larger—as in the account of the award of the King of Holland on the Maine boundary, which was given in 1831, two years earlier than he represents it as having been asked for. Nor did it concern the delimitation of the state of Massachusetts. It had no such one-sided character as to justify the statement that it "went much against England." The Earl of Aberdeen was not dissatisfied with it, but calls it, in these pages, "an honest judgment."

Mr. Croker's strictures on Mr. Webster are equally groundless. Mr. Jared Sparks's famous red line map (the Franklin map), with the boundary traced according to the English view of the case, has not been found, and is a doubtful mystery. The English search for it, prosecuted by successive explorers, among them Sir Edward Bulwer, was only successful in discovering a red line map which corresponds with Mr. Sparks's description in every particular but the important one that the boundary is placed on it just where the American claim located it. Aberdeen writes, Feb. 25th, 1843: "It is a strange thing that neither letter nor map are to be found at Paris. . . . But we have found *another* map altogether in favor of the American claim." The Jared Sparks map was never more than a doubtful second-hand affair; but this *other* map is, and was, a matter of official knowledge, in the possession of the British Government, which was not brought forward until the question of the boundary and the right of the parties had passed out of the region of diplomacy into the cooler one of historical scholarship. So much for this charge that Mr. Webster pressed for the whole, when he knew that he was entitled to only a part, now brought against him by the partisan of a government who had under their hands official proof that they were entitled to nothing.

He is equally wide of the mark as to the causes and meaning of events at home. In spite of the Duke of Wellington's assurance to the contrary, he insists that Sir Robert Peel's conversion in 1842 to Free Trade was not due to the failure of the potato crop and the Irish famine, but to "fright at the League." In all this he shows himself the representative of the class of Tories who governed England and occupied themselves mightily with its affairs in what a reader of the modern temper and training might mistake for genuine public spirit until he learns to appreciate how it is mixed up with the old Tory identification of England, with the Monarchy, primogeniture, bishops and their lordships, and how far rotten boroughs, corporate monopolies, dukes and duchesses went with him and his friends toward representing the British constitution and British freedom. Mr. Croker's type of this temper approaches self-abnegation when he refuses a cabinet position, on the ground, among other arguments, that he does not belong to a noble house. Titles are much to him. He loves to enumerate the rank of the men with whom he is dining out, and does not fail to note that he is the only untitled guest. Yet all this is genuine and unaffected. He can still note that Sir Robert Peel regards these distinctions with something like disfavor, and quote his saying: "The voracity for these things quite surprises me. I wonder people do not begin to feel the distinction of an unadorned name."

It is vain to search these volumes for light as to the motives which led this man of simple heart, and with his love of "the distinction of an unadorned name," to change his ground and win an imperishable fame by conferring on England, in connection with Mr. Cobden, the boon of cheap food. Mr. Jennings's capacity for assuming the part of his hero carries him over to Mr. Croker's side in his rupture with Peel. The rupture is of small consequence, except as it illustrates the blindness and bitterness of the Tory politics of the times. Mr. Croker was himself, in a sense, a Catholic Emancipationist; he had more than half adopted the political economy of Peel's policy. But when he broke away from his lagging party, the only explanation possible to the Tory mind was treachery; a theory of the case which Mr. Croker did not fail to press in the *Quarterly Review*.

The offensive character of his aggressive Toryism is kept out of sight by Mr. Jennings, who, to do him justice, does not see it. It was this which called out Lord Macaulay to put him in the pillory, and which inspired Mr. Trevelyan to leave him there, and Miss Martineau to abuse him maliciously when he died, while Thackeray set him up for Mr. Wenham, "Lord Steyne's Vizier and chief confidential servant (with a seat in Parliament and at the dinner-table)," and Disraeli drew his portrait in "Vivian Grey" and "Coningsby," as Mr. Digby, the man of "desultory information" and "mendacious fancy, fruitful in small expedients, and never happier than when devising shifts for great men's scrapes."

We have dwelt on these points because they needed to be pointed out in a work that is sure to be read, and whose fascinations are many.

To some of them the reader may surrender himself, and sip their honey without check. The lover of good stories will find many more of them worth remembering than we can quote. A Mr. Pepper—the same, we suppose, who, at his own *soiree*, was saluted by Douglas Jerrold, on coming in late, "Ah! Mr. Pepper, I am glad to see your friends mustered!"—this Mr. Pepper asked Lord Norbury to "suggest a name for a very fine hunter of his. Lord Norbury, who knew that Mr. Pepper had had a fall or two, advised him to call the horse *Peppercaster*."

The same Lord Norbury gave Mr. O'Connell a palpable hit in this way:

"Mr. O'Connell, whose arrest by the civil power, as he was proceeding to meet Mr. Peel (in a duel), was supposed not to be quite involuntary on his own part, was soon after arguing a law point in the Common Pleas, and happened to use the phrase, 'I fear, my Lords, I do not make myself understood.' 'Go on, go on, Mr. O'Connell,' replied Lord Norbury, 'no one is more easily *apprehended*.'"

The humor of this one is great. A certain Captain Hall, on his way home from the China Seas, touched at St. Helena, where he saw Napoleon, and told him of the people he had found in Loo-Choo, in such a state of primitive innocence as to have no offensive weapons. "*Diable!*" exclaimed Bonaparte, "*et comment font-ils donc la guerre?*" Hall related this conversation afterward at Vansittart's, to the amusement of everybody except Vansittart, who remained silent. Hall went on to say that Napoleon was incredulous, and that, to convince him, he had added for another evidence of the extreme simplicity of the islanders that they had no money. "No money!" cried Vansittart, with the greatest vivacity: "Good Heavens! Captain Hall, how do they carry on the government?" These examples must serve to show our readers that they can find entertainment as well as instruction in these pages.

The personal memorabilia are of still deeper interest. The disclosures as to Napoleon, Fouché and Talleyrand, if made earlier, would have been a revelation, but even now, with the flood of evidence we possess to the same purport, add something to the picture. Talleyrand is shown to have devoted himself all day with Napoleon to negotiating a treaty, and the same night intrigued with the Czar against it. Fouché goes one step lower in the infamy to which he has already been assigned, and the Napoleonic myth fades in many ways.

A long dictation from William IV, evidently designed for publication, appears in the first volume. Mr. Jennings apparently did not know it was at the time made the basis of an article by Mr. Croker in the *Quarterly Review*. It adds another example to the proofs of the King's very bad memory in denying his marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert, and has provoked one reviewer to recall the old story that the King once appealed to Wellington to say whether his assertion that he was present at Waterloo was not true, when the Duke replied: "I have often heard Your Majesty assert that you were."

Croker must have known the facts when he published the royal denial; for he says: "The Prince certainly married Mrs. Fitzherbert with the left hand; the ceremony was performed by Parson John, who is still about town." Nor was he afterward ignorant of Lord Grey's written statement that the King confessed to him his secret marriage.

After all, the most interesting part of these personal memorabilia relate to the Duke of Wellington, and give a higher impression of his genius. They begin when he went to Portugal, continue till his death, and are very full, very specific, and very various. We have space only for one. Mr. Croker relates that in 1808 after talking of business:

"He seemed to lapse into a kind of reverie, and remained silent so long that I asked him what he was thinking of. He replied: 'Why, to say the truth, I am thinking of

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the French that I am going to fight. I have not seen them since the campaign in Flanders, when they were capital soldiers; and a dozen years of victory under Bonaparte must have made them better still. They have besides, it seems, a new system of strategy, which has outmaneuvered and overwhelmed all the armies of Europe. 'Tis enough to make one thoughtful; but no matter; my die is cast; they may overwhelm me, but I don't think they will outmaneuver me. First, because I am not afraid of them, as everybody else seems to be; and, secondly, because if what I hear of their system of maneuvers be true, I think it a false one as against steady troops. I suspect all the continental armies were more than half beaten before the battle was begun. I, at least, will not be frightened beforehand.'"

This shows that the Duke was already on the path on which he was finally to beat Napoleon. In the next volume occurs a passage in which, after the war was over, he maintained before the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Russia the weakness of the Napoleonic system of attack in column as against a line of steady troops.

This is significant as bearing on the place he is to hold among the great soldiers of the world. The Napoleonic attack in column was a return in principle to the old formation in heavy battalion, which was upset by Gustavus Adolphus. With the artillery now used, it would only result in placing the men before the guns to be blown away. Wellington seems to have been the first to perceive its defect, and how a steady line could defeat it altogether.