

leaves a sense of inadequacy to its subject. This is partly owing to the terribly "Rule Britannia" nature of its conclusion. Whatever voice of Apollo or the muses still haunts the place where, long ago, χαρμὰ πῆσε δαίδαλος αἰλά, it is hard to fancy that it had nothing better to say to a wandering Englishman than to compliment him on our contemporary poetry. This blunt, heavy touch mars several of Mr. Austin's poems. But in the last sonnet no such fault can be found (p. 142):

## "LOVE'S HARVESTING.

"Nay, do not quarrel with the seasons, dear,  
Nor make an enemy of friendly Time.  
The fruit and foliage of the falling year  
Rival the buds and blossoms of its prime.  
Is not the harvest-moon as round and bright  
As that to which the nightingales did sing?  
And thou, that call'st thyself my satellite,  
Wilt seem in Autumn all thou art in Spring.  
When steadfast sunshine follows fitful rain,  
And gleam the sickle where once passed the  
plough,  
Since tender green hath grown to mellow grain,  
Love then will gather what it scattereth now,  
And, like contented reaper, rest its head  
Upon the sheaves itself hath harvested."

E. D. A. MORSEHEAD.

*West African Islands.* By A. B. Ellis.  
(Chapman & Hall.)\*

THE reader of travels now knows what to expect from Major A. B. Ellis, whose fifteen visits to Western Africa, extending through as many years, have already produced three volumes, the picturesque and outspoken *Land of Fetish* being the favourite. He can tell an over-dry tale in a pleasant way, with a sub-acid humour which disguises insipidity, his *mise-en-scène* and his "topothesia" are artistic, and he has scant respect for the commonplaces of travel. He cherishes a rooted aversion to everything which, as the late Lord Strangford used to say, "wears a black coat, natural or artificial": his civilised negro is an anthropoid ape, his missionary is a "bird of prey," and one of his bishops is a "flibuster"—a counterpoise to the Protestant "buccaneer-bishop" of whom we heard some years ago.

Yet Major Ellis has this time undertaken a thankless task. Firstly, since the export slave-trade has died the death and the Middle Passage is no more, the home public has lost all interest in its ugly black pets; it feels that its philanthropy has shown a very silly side—e.g., at Sierra Leone, an admirable specimen of what a negro colony ought not to be—and it wants to hear no more of the matter, unless highly-spiced with battle and murder and German annexation. Secondly, the West African Islands all want, Madeira excepted, scientific monographs; but as subjects for popular description they are without novelty or interest—dry as summer dust or foul as winter mud.

The author begins south with Saint Helena, and works northwards ending at Madeira; and the reviewer has only to follow him. Saint Helena, not called from the "wife of Constantine" (p. 8), the Crown colony of severe type, where cherries refuse to grow and the busy bee to breed, is "down in its

luok" at present, and will not recover till a sanitarium of hot dry air is required for "pest-house" colonies of Europeans on the opposite coast of Africa. Major Ellis is justly severe upon the ungenerous and ignoble conduct of a British Government which sent a Napoleon Buonaparte to eat his heart out in this hole. Very good fun is extracted from the cinder-heap Ascension Island, that most priggish of naval stations, officially known as "Tender to H.M.S. *Flora*"; but the author did not see its sole specialty, the "gull-fair"; and he neglects to caution visitors against its nervous, "jumpy" climate. Many an honest drinker from The Bights has died at Ascension of D. T. within the month. Of the natives and their language in Fernando Po, a writer should not treat without reading the *Introduction to the Fernandian Tongue*, by John Clark (Berwick-on-Tweed, 1848). The British trader called the people "boobies," from the word "bobe" (a man), by which they often designate themselves; and the dialect, instead of having "some slight affinities with one or two South African languages" (p. 59) is an excellent specimen of the great linguistic family, for which the trivial name "Bantu" has been thoughtlessly accepted, apparently because proposed by a German philologist. He is quite right about the inordinate consumption of consuls at Fernando Po, but the story he tells about their pensions (p. 81) is a "Joe Miller" originating with the first judge at Sierra Leone. He sharply characterises the style of conversion hitherto adopted: "What they want to do is to make them Methodists first and Christians afterwards." Major Ellis seems only to have landed at the Isles de Los ("of the idols"), where some curious fetish remains are found; but he has not forgotten to recount how, in the old Napoleonic Wars, the British frigate *Amelia* first attacked and then ran away from a Frenchman of her own size, the *Aréthuse*.

The next chapter touches at St. Vincent, Cape Verde, perhaps the least interesting island colonised by man. But why not call it by its right name, São Vicente, and, above all things, why "San Antonio" for Sant' Antão? Apparently the Englishman will never make the distinction between Saint Anthony the Hermit (*Antão*) and St. Anthony of Lisbon-Padua (*Antonio*). And, again, why "Senoras and Senhoritas" (p. 133) for "Senhoras and Senhorazinhas"? Have our people made up their minds that Spanish is identical with Portuguese, German with Dutch? In days gone by a magazine editor who spoke, as the Spaniards say, five words of bad Castilian, proceeded to correct my good Portuguese. Nor can I agree with Major Ellis (p. 140), "Strip a Spaniard of all his good qualities, and you have a Portuguese." I should say, "Strip a Portuguese of his thrift and industry, supply him well with bigotry and a pride which has nothing to be proud of, and you have a Spaniard."

The break-neck ride over the mule-paths of Sant' Antão is good, and so is the execution of "Citizen Louis Bonaparte" at Goree (p. 180); but we must simply decline accompanying Major Ellis to Grand Canary, Tenerife, and Madeira. All he tells us about them is as well known as the mysterious regions of Belgrave Square and Waterloo Place. As regards Madeira, I am glad to

hear that the excellent "Handbook," first printed in 1851, is being re-issued by the surviving collaborator, the venerable Mr. J. Y. Johnson.

Major Ellis has been extraordinarily inquisitive about his "proper names," and similar minor details. We have, for instance, Fernas do Poo (p. 53) instead of Fernam de Póo; Mongo-ma-Lábah (p. 80) for Lobah; "the Alimani or king" (p. 184) for the "Alimamy" (Al Imám = antistes or fugleman in public prayer); Anagra (for Anaga) Point (p. 234); and "Bangor's Pillar" for Banger's Folly (p. 313). One is curious to know when "kous-kous" (kuskusu) became a damper (p. 192), what language *no compran* belongs to (p. 161), and who may be "His Eminence the Pope" (p. 194).

In taking leave of Major Ellis, I allow myself the liberty of suggesting that a man who can write so well upon the lighter scenes of travel, should find some subject better adapted to his specialty than these most uninteresting West African Islands; and I think that every reader of this volume will agree with me in wishing that the writer would try his hand on a work of fiction pure and unadulterated.

RICHARD F. BURTON.

*Prolegomena of the History of Religions.* By Albert Réville. Translated by A. S. Squire. With an Introduction by F. Max Müller. (Williams & Norgate.)

PROF. MAX MÜLLER'S Introduction is, of course, charmingly written, and with many readers will serve as the best of testimonials. But the subject of the work is so new, and there are so many who look upon it with an evil eye, that the mediation of a friendly reviewer may not be inopportune. It is worth while, then, to remark that if religion is the "soul of history," it must be a meritorious work to show that the non-Christian religions are not an "inextricable jungle of falsehoods and absurdities." What Carlyle desired the Hibbert Lectures are beginning to accomplish for the increasing public of unprofessional students. The *Prolegomena of the History of Religions* worthily follow the Hibbert Lectures of last year, in which the same author describes the spirit in which he writes in the following terms:

"It is as a historian that I am here, and as a historian I shall speak. Only let me say at once that, while retaining my own very marked preferences, I place religion itself, as a faculty, an attribute, a tendency natural to the human mind, above all the forms, even the most exalted, which it has assumed in time and space" (pp. 5, 6).

This should be carefully remembered, as there is a very common prejudice against the historical study of religions, arising out of the assumption that the would-be historians have no religion or no theistic religion of their own. M. Réville is clearly not one of those referred to by Prof. Wordsworth in his learned and profoundly Christian Bampton Lectures on the same subject in the sentence, "Their mouths are full of the various ways in which other men have thought of God, but He Himself is far from their own thoughts" (*The One Religion*, p. 73). It is true that M. Réville gives us in neither book a confession of

\* Happily without illustrations, but wanting a sketch-map to orienter the reader.