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The
Origin and Authorship
of the

Bancroft Pacific States Publications:
A History of a History.

I

by
William Alfred Morris, 1875-

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THE QUARTERLY
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THE ORIGIN AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE
BANCROFT PACIFIC STATES PUB-
LICATIONS: A HISTORY OF
A HISTORY.—I.

By WILLIAM ALFRED MORRIS.

The true student of history, when confronted for the first time with a statement of what purports to be an historical fact, weighs at the outset, as all-important, the evidence of its accuracy. If there be at hand no means of verifying the statement, the only ground of assurance is a knowledge of who is speaking, how likely he is to know the truth, and how well fitted he is to tell it; for to be a writer of accurate history one must not only know facts, but must also be truthful, and so far above bias upon his subject as to be able to treat it fairly, openly, and without false coloring of any part. It is therefore the first canon of historical criticism to accept as authority no statement unless it be known who is making that statement.

The greater our interest in a given subject, the more important to us becomes the question of the authority for all statements concerning that subject. As the field of history is narrowed down to a single state or to a single

locality, where every man may to a certain extent be an historian, an anonymous written account, though excellent in itself, will still be viewed with suspicion. The fact that there is a good local knowledge of the subject by no means removes the necessity of determining authorship.

Fortunate it is for the Pacific States and Territories of the United States that data concerning their history from its beginning were collected during the lifetime of men who laid the foundations of these commonwealths. It is then a matter of the highest importance to the people of this vast empire to know who wove this material together, and wrote the only attempt at a full and connected history of the Pacific Coast which has ever been published.

The completion of the Bancroft series of Pacific Slope histories, to which reference is here made, marks an event unique in the annals of history writing. At no other time and in no other land has there been carried to completion a work of like character and magnitude. There had previously been written a few histories of Oregon and California covering a certain period, and designed chiefly to give a treatment of a certain institution or political subject, but so far as the thorough working up of the whole ground was concerned, a virgin field presented itself.

Moreover, the undertaking was an unusually inspiring one. It was none other than that of tracing from the days when Europeans first trod the Pacific shores of America the sequence of events by which these lands were acquired and occupied by their present holders, political governments organized, and the development of resources entered upon; in short, it was the following up of the successive steps by which the institutions and industries of a nineteenth century civilization were established in a western wilderness. When we remember that the greater part of this record could at the time of writing be made

from information furnished directly by the men who made this history, and that the lack of material which so often embarrasses the writer could not here be a cause of complaint, we may well conclude that such an opportunity had never before fallen to the lot of the historian.

Again, in the vast collection of historical sources into one place, as well as in the newness of the field and inspiring nature of the work, the undertaking presents a most remarkable feature. The projector of this enterprise was the first on the coast to undertake such a collection on a large scale. This fact, together with the recency of many of the events, which both rendered an unending number of eye-witnesses easily accessible for procuring personal narratives, and likewise caused those who possessed papers and books throwing light upon history, to set slight value upon them, enabled Mr. Bancroft to collect a library of material such as on the beginning and early chapters of Pacific Coast history in all probability can never again be equalled.

Finally, in the amount of material which it presents, and in the extent of ground which it covers, the Bancroft series has attained epoch-making proportions. So closely related is the history of the Pacific states and territories of the United States to that of the regions north and south, that to insure a complete understanding of it required the writing also of the History of Mexico, Texas, and Central America, as well as that of British Columbia and Alaska. When we learn that two thousand different authorities were consulted in writing the History of Central America, and ten thousand in arranging the material for the History of Mexico; that in taking out material for the History of California eight men were employed for six years; and that in merely indexing the material for the History of Mexico five men worked ten years, we are inclined to quote approvingly these words of Mr. Bancroft:

"I say, then, without unpardonable boasting, that in my opinion there never in the history of literature was performed so consummate a feat as the gathering, abstracting, and arranging of the material for this History of the Pacific States": (Bancroft's Literary Industries, 581).

The history of no American locality would be considered without some account of its aborigines. The result, then, of this Bancroft plan has been the writing of the History of the Pacific slope of the continent from Bering Sea to Darien, with a History of the Native Races in five volumes as an introduction, and a half dozen volumes of sketches and essays by way of conclusion, in all thirty-nine octavo volumes.

But this work, the greatest of the kind, few if any of whose separate divisions have been superseded by later works has suffered greatly in the estimation of historians because they do not know who is authority for the statements contained in them. Justice to the people of any state or territory whose history appears in this series demands that they should know in whose words it is related. A compliance with the reasonable expectations of the pioneers who contributed books, narrations, and documents to aid in the preparation of a standard history of their respective states calls for a public knowledge of the identity of the writer to the end that the volume in which their chief interest centers be not stigmatized as anonymous. And above all, a conformity with usage, not to mention an observance of the principles of right, requires that the author of finished work published in this series, or any other, should receive public acknowledgment of his labors and whatever of praise or blame is his due.

Ten years ago it was shown in the California press that the Bancroft histories are not the works of the man who claims to be their author. But to say that "The

Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft' were written by any person other than Hubert Howe Bancroft is such a contradiction as to startle today the great majority both East and West whose attention have never been directed to the question. To determine the authorship of a work we are wont to consult its title page, and the title pages of these volumes all declare that they are "By Hubert Howe Bancroft." The advertising matter sent out by the Bancroft publishing establishment refers to them as "the writings of Mr. Bancroft," with never a suggestion that any other person wrote a line. The same course was followed in the reviews of these volumes, which at the time of their publication were scattered by the press throughout the length and breadth of the leading countries of Europe, as well as our own land, although here we must remember that book reviews may be but another name for advertising matter prepared by the publisher and inserted at advertising rates. In his *Literary Industries*, the volume giving an account of his literary activities, Mr. Bancroft refers to himself as the author (*Lit. Ind.*, 361, 661), and speaks of his own writing without a clear reference to that of others (*Lit. Ind.*, 288, 568, 571, 653) in such terms as to give the impression that he was the only writer who prepared the manuscript as it went to the printer. True, he mentions assistants, and we can easily see, as he tells us, that he must have had fifteen or twenty note takers, cataloguers, and other library aids (*Lit. Ind.*, 582) in order to arrange so vast an amount of material. When assistants are mentioned it is usually in words which justify the reader in the inference that these aids are meant (see *Central America I*, preface, viii; *Literary Industries*, 584), and that, therefore, the assistants are in no sense authors.

By a careful reading of the *Literary Industries*, however, we find that there was a class of assistants who are

differentiated from ordinary library aids, by the statement that they were "more experienced and able," and whose work Mr. Bancroft describes as "the study and reduction of certain minor sections of the history which I employed in my writing after more or less condensation and change": (Lit. Ind., 568). But even this passage seems to indicate that the material prepared by these writers was rewritten by Mr. Bancroft.

As a result, therefore, of the indication of the title page of these works, of the recognition of the public press, of the statements of the Literary Industries, and of Mr. Bancroft's connection with the work widely known through personal means, it happens that today he is called the "Historian of the Pacific Coast." Furthermore, he is the only person to whom such a title is given, being so recognized by newspapers, encyclopedias, and the people at large. In the minds of the great number, Hubert Howe Bancroft is the historian of the Pacific states for just the same reason that George Bancroft is the historian of the United States. Speaking in accord with this popular estimate of Mr. Bancroft's work, Wendell Phillips once called him "The Macaulay of the West."

Nowhere, however, can there be found a statement by this historian in which he lays an unequivocal claim to the authorship of the works which have been published under his name. By his own words quoted above he admits that the work was, at least in part, coöperative, and that he was a compiler of the work of his assistants. And for any one man to assert authorship of the Bancroft series of histories would be preposterous. According to actual computation, the mere work of arranging the material and writing the History of the Pacific States, after a small army of note-takers had concluded their operations, represents an equivalent to the labors of one man

for a hundred years: (Frances Fuller Victor in *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 14, 1893.) Moreover, the use of quotations from foreign languages, of which Mr. Bancroft had no knowledge, proves that parts of the work are not from his pen, while the different literary styles (see for example, the review of Oregon I in the *New York Tribune*, Nov. 26, 1886; in the *S. F. Argonaut*, Oct. 23, 1886; in the *Sacramento D. Record-Union*, Oct. 27, 1886; and in the *Portland Oregonian*, Oct. 28, 1886), and varying degrees of historical workmanship (Compare reviews of Oregon II in *N. Y. Tribune*, January, 1887; and in *S. F. Chronicle*, Jan. 13, 1887, with reviews of other Bancroft works) clearly reveal the work of a number of writers.

A little knowledge on this point has proved a dangerous thing for the reputation of the histories. Some of the newspapers of the coast have learned that Mr. Bancroft did not do all the writing and have even published the names of other authors of the series with statements more or less conjectural as to the writing done by them. In some cases, wild speculations as to the authorship of the works have been published. Many are under the impression that those who went about taking statements of pioneers and in other ways collecting material were themselves writing the manuscript which was published, and that consequently much of the history is no more critically written than an ordinary newspaper article, and as little known about its authorship. Furthermore, it is believed in some quarters that those who prepared narrations for Mr. Bancroft were writing history for him to publish, and that persons not connected with the Bancroft library were authors of parts of the work. In accordance with this idea, it has been claimed that a certain tone favorable to the Mormons which runs through the History of Utah is to be accounted for by the theory that the volume was written by some one con-

nected with the Mormon church, whereas the truth is that, although the historian of that church prepared some data for Mr. Bancroft's use, the work was prepared in the library by Mr. Bancroft and one of his assistants from the annals in his possession (Frances Fuller Victor in *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 14, 1893).

In some instances, the histories have lost standing because of the assumption that Mr. Bancroft was their author. Thus statements in the *History of California* supposed to be, but now known not to be from his pen, have been singled out as reckless, and argument has been made upon the principle "false in one thing, false in all," that the seven whole volumes of California history are unworthy of credence (pamphlet proceedings of the Society of California Pioneers in reference to the histories of Hubert Howe Bancroft, page 10). Following this lead an attempt has been made to discredit Bancroft's Oregon on the ground that his California is said to be unreliable.

Had Mr. Bancroft made public the fact that three persons besides himself wrote the *History of California*, that he was in reality the author of but sixty pages in the entire seven volumes of that set, that he had not the least claim to the authorship of the *History of Oregon*, and that the histories of the two states were in the main written by different persons, the fallacy of this argument would have been clear, estimates of the collections of matter in these volumes would have been made on their own intrinsic merit, and their value would not have been impaired by false assumptions concerning their authorship.

A third result of this neglect of Mr. Bancroft to make public acknowledgment of the extent of the writings of his assistants has been the accusation "that he is a purloiner of other peoples' brains," (*Salt Lake Tribune*, Feb.

16, 1893) and that he has made a reputation as an author at the expense of his assistants. Concerning this charge, the most remarkable ever made in the annals of American historical writing, the reader must be the judge after weighing all the facts.

The writer's apology for this article is his desire to give such facts as he has in the hope that they will do something to clear up mistaken ideas concerning the authorship of these histories, that they may aid somewhat in forming a correct estimate of the series, and that they may secure for the other authors as well as for Mr. Bancroft whatever credit is rightfully theirs. To these ends it is to be hoped that those who have any additional facts will make them public. The late Frances Fuller Victor, one of the Bancroft corps of writers, had long collected material on the authorship of the histories. In preparing this paper, the writer has depended largely upon information furnished by her correspondence and papers, and by explanations given by her in conversation.

The statement of Mr. Bancroft in the *Literary Industries* to the effect that his "assistants" merely wrote up minor topics which he then used in his own writing, must be taken as applying to the work as projected rather than as actually carried out. In a letter written in 1878 before the final division of labor was made, Mr. Bancroft said, "When all the material I have is gone over and notes taken according to the general plan, I shall give one person one thing or one part to write, and another person another part": (Letter to Mrs. Victor of August 1, 1878.) Here, it will be observed, the plan is for the "assistants" to do the actual work of writing history and not to prepare material for their chief to use in his writing. And it will shortly appear that it was the "assistants" who wrote the work and Mr. Bancroft who wrote the minor parts. To understand why the intended order

was thus reversed, it is necessary to study the growth of the history project and to enter into the steps through which it was evolved.

Hubert Howe Bancroft, with whose name these works are linked, and who has been widely credited as their author, is a native of Granville, Ohio, where he was born May 5, 1832, a descendent of old New England families through both the paternal and maternal lines. In his own account of his life (*Literary Industries*, 47-244), he tells us that when but three years old he could read the New Testament without having to spell many of the words. At the school age, however, he found it difficult to learn, and after a winter at the brick schoolhouse under the tutelage of a brother of his mother, the latter became satisfied that he was not treated judiciously and fairly took him out of school.

A sister had married George H. Derby, a bookseller of Geneva, New York, subsequently of Buffalo, and at about the age of fifteen, the boy was offered the choice of preparing for college or entering the Buffalo bookstore. He at first chose the former course and spent a year in the academy of his town, but becoming discouraged in his study, entered the employ of Derby in August, 1848. Discharged from the store in six months, he returned to Ohio and acted as a sales agent for his brother-in-law's goods with such success that he was invited back to the store and became a clerk with the beginning of the year 1850. His father, influenced by the gold excitement, decided to go to California in February of that year, and with George L. Kenny, his closest friend, he was sent by Derby to handle books in the land of gold, setting out in December, 1851.

After their arrival in San Francisco, Sacramento was determined upon as a place of business, and young Bancroft worked in the mines until arrangements could be

made with his brother-in-law. But Derby's death in the meantime ended the plan, and in 1853, he set out to try his fortune at the newly-boomed mining town of Crescent City. Here he was employed as bookkeeper and bookseller, and made six or eight thousand dollars, most of which he subsequently lost through investing in Crescent City property. In 1855, Mr. Bancroft made a visit to his old home in the East, and his sister, in return for his assistance in recovering the amount of Derby's California investment, let him have the sum, amounting to \$5,500, with which to begin business. Obtaining credit in New York he shipped a ten thousand dollar stock of goods for San Francisco, and with Kenny organized the firm of H. H. Bancroft and Company about December 1, 1856.

From the first, Mr. Bancroft tells us, he had a taste for publishing, and it was but three years until the inception of what grew into the historical project. In 1859, Wm. H. Knight, manager of the Bancroft publishing department, while employed in preparing the Hand Book Almanac for the next year, asked for the books necessary to carry on the work. It occurred to the head of the firm that he would again have occasion to refer to books on the coast states, and he accordingly transferred to Mr. Knight a copy of each of the fifty or seventy-five books in stock that had reference to the country. Later he added to the number by purchases in second-hand stores, and when in the East secured from the bookstores of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, volumes which fell under his observation. By 1862, he had a thousand volumes, and upon a visit to London and Paris in that year, learned that much more remained to be done. In 1866, he started on a search throughout Europe, which resulted in increasing his collection to ten thousand volumes. As to the field covered by these works, he says:

"Gradually and almost imperceptibly had the area of

my efforts enlarged. From Oregon it was but a step to British Columbia and Alaska ; and as I was obliged from California to go to Mexico and Spain, it finally became settled in my mind to make the western half of North America my field": (Lit. Ind. 180). He now began the collection of Mexican works and the purchase of private libraries in the United States. In 1869, after ten years' collecting, the library numbered sixteen thousand volumes, about half of which were pamphlets. In May of the next year, these were placed on one floor of the Bancroft building on Market Street, and a young New Englander named Henry L. Oak, lately editor of a religious journal published by the firm, was installed as librarian.

(The main facts of Oak's life, as learned by Mrs. Victor, are as follows: Henry Labbeus Oak was born at Garland, Maine, in 1844. His ancestry—including the family names of Oak, Merriam, Hastings, Hill, and Smith—was entirely American from a period preceding the Revolutionary War, being originally English and Welsh. He was educated at the public and private schools of his native town until, in 1861, he entered Bowdoin College, and was graduated at Dartmouth in the class of 1865. During his college course, he taught in the public and high schools of different towns in Maine ; and after graduation, for a year in an academy at Morristown, New Jersey.

Mr. Oak came to California by steamer in 1866, and, after some attempts at commercial life, broken by a long illness, again became a teacher. A year was spent as principal of the public school at Haywards, and as instructor in the collegiate institute at Napa, and in the spring of 1868, he became office editor of the *Occident*, a Presbyterian paper which the Bancroft house was then publishing for an association. According to Mr. Bancroft (Lit. Ind. 219), "the whole burden of the journal

gradually fell on him." But when, owing to a disagreement with the religious association, the firm declined to publish the paper any longer, the young editor was left without employment. In the meantime a somewhat erratic Englishman named Bosquetti had succeeded Knight as custodian of the Bancroft library, and Oak was appointed to assist him. Upon his decamping a few months later, at the end of 1868, Mr. Oak was appointed to the position.)

The beginning of a classification of the material in the library had been made by Mr. Knight, who saved clippings and arranged them in scrap-books and boxes. It now became Oak's duty to superintend the extraction of material from the volumes in his custody and to catalogue new books as they came in. In May, 1871, he prepared for publication by the firm, two guide-books for tourists. It was at the same time that Mr. Bancroft took another step toward the history plan.

The plan of publishing a Pacific Coast encyclopedia had been under consideration for a year or two, and was now adopted. Mr. Bancroft began to look for contributors. John S. Hittell, publisher of the *Commerce and Industries of the Pacific Coast*, prepared a list of the principal subjects to be treated, and Oak began to gather statements from pioneers and contributors of every sort by issuing circulars and writing letters. For about a year the preparations continued. During the first half of 1872 Ora Oak, a younger brother of the librarian, together with others, extracted material on Pacific Coast voyages and travels. Walter M. Fisher, an educated young Englishman who came to the library early in the year, wrote out such travels as those of Bryant, Bayard Taylor, and Humboldt. The librarian, finding inadequate the system of indexing the library then in use, set to work to devise a more practical one, and spent three

months in bringing it to perfection. This was apparently the only part of the year's work which proved abiding.

That the material in the Bancroft library was better adapted to the preparation of a history than of an encyclopedia gradually appeared to those who came in contact with it. (Walter M. Fisher was born in Ulster in 1849, and was the son of a Presbyterian clergyman, a member of an English and Scotch colony. He was educated at Queen's College, Belfast. Nemos remembered him as "a handsome fellow, a great eater, and a hard worker." Together with Harcourt, he left Bancroft's employ in 1874 to accept the editorship of the *Overland Monthly*. Returning to London in 1875, he published a clever work entitled the *Californians*. Subsequently he became a physician). After several years of suggestion, discussion, and change, Mr. Bancroft decided to reshape the entire plan of work accordingly. The history of the Pacific slope of the continent was to be written, beginning at the Isthmus of Panama with the first appearance of the Spaniards, and then taking up the successive regions to the north as their history had its beginning. This work, embracing an account of all the various republics, provinces, states, and territories along the Pacific, it was decided to designate as *The History of the Pacific States*.

Heretofore, Mr. Bancroft had been known only as bookseller and publisher, and manager of one of San Francisco's large business houses. His experience in writing had been limited to the preparation of some material for the proposed encyclopedia. But now, when he had reached the age of forty years, practically all of them except the first sixteen, spent in the world of business, the head of the firm of H. H. Bancroft and Company made his first venture as a literary man, writing himself and rewriting the work of others. He began by

preparing what he considered a suitable introduction to the history. The task was not easy, especially for one unaccustomed to write. In fourteen weeks he had taken out material from which he wrote three hundred pages of introduction to the History of Central America which he subsequently reduced to seventy-five pages. This seems to have been the only part of the work that he considered as exclusively his own theme: (Lit. Ind., 291) But this matter subsequently had to be rewritten.

While writing on this volume, Mr. Bancroft became convinced that the history could not be complete without an account of the original inhabitants of the coast. To quote his own words, "I did not fancy them, I would gladly have avoided them. I was no archaeologist, ethnologist, or antiquary, and I had no desire to become such. My tastes in the matter, however, did not dispose of the subject. The savages were there, and there was no help for me; I must write them up to get rid of them." To compile information concerning the manners and customs, the mythology, the language, and the antiquities of these aborigines, Mr. Bancroft estimated that two volumes would be required: (Lit. Ind., 301). The Native Races as completed is a work of five volumes. So much of an expansion in all of the early historical plan was necessary.

Mr. Bancroft, wrote but two hundred and seventy out of the four thousand pages of the Native Races, devoting his time while that series was in preparation largely to a rewriting of the first volume of Central America, to a continuation of a summary of early voyages for other volumes, and to a perfection of the plan and a collecting of material for the histories. His relation to this work may be likened to that of a managing editor. He decided upon the division of labor as suggested by Oak or others, and required changes in the manuscript as com-

pleted if he considered them necessary, either for the sake of treatment or style, but the extent of his writing as printed in this work certainly falls far short of that necessary to substantiate the claim which he has made to its authorship. The chapter which he wrote was that on the Hyperboreans. As to this work, he tells us in the *Literary Industries* that during the first half of the year 1873 he "was writing on northern Indian matter, giving out the notes on the southern division to go over the field again and take out additional notes": (*Lit. Ind.* 571). As to his further connection with the work, he says that in December of the same year he became convinced that the plan of treating Indian languages adopted by Goldschmidt was not the proper one, and that the latter was "obliged to go over the entire field again and re-arrange and add to the subject matter before I would attempt the writing of it." (*Lit. Ind.*, 573.) This passage ascribes the actual preparation of the volume to Goldschmidt, and the writing referred to here must have been largely in the nature of editorial work. It is hardly to be presumed that a man of Mr. Bancroft's education and slight literary experience would have attempted at this time anything so ambitious as the complete preparation of a treatise on Indian languages.

We see, then, that although the influence of Mr. Bancroft was felt in arrangement and even in style, the *Native Races* was written almost entirely by other persons. But one would hardly suppose that such was the case from reading the words: "During the progress of this work I succeeded in utilizing the labors of my assistants to the full extent of my anticipations": (*Lit. Ind.*, 304).

When speaking in the *Literary Industries* of work done for him by others, Mr. Bancroft shows a habit which is derived from his long experience as manager of a business concern. His constant tendency is to speak of work

done by those in his employ as his work, neglecting a distinction between a publisher and an author, which is a vital one. The reputation of a publishing house depends upon the workmanship of its employes, but that of an author depends solely upon his own talents and the work of his own hands. While a publisher may with all propriety speak of work done by agents as his printing, for him to say that writing done for him by others is his writing is a positive misstatement. When Mr. Bancroft paid his writers for their manuscript, he became its owner with full rights of publication, but no one will say for a moment that he thereby became the author. In speaking of the Native Races, as well as the History of the Pacific States, Mr. Bancroft often does so in such terms as to indicate that writing was done by him when it was his only by purchase, (Compare statements in Literary Industries, 303, 568, 571, and in Native Races I, preface xiii, with the facts as shown by the statements of different members of Bancroft's literary corps as to the work actually done by each writer and as given later in this article.)

The division of responsibility for collating and arranging facts for the various divisions of the Native Races was made apparently toward the latter part of the year 1872. We are told that routine work was laid aside for three or four weeks in the middle of the summer, and this time devoted to placing the library in order and cataloguing the new books which had been added. This was obviously done preparatory to entering upon the new work. To a young Englishman who called himself T. Arundel-Harcourt, and who entered the library in November, was assigned the preparation of that portion of the work devoted to the manners and customs of the civilized nations. (This man's true name he did not

reveal. His collaborator Nemos says that he attended a boarding school, and then continued his studies in Germany, at Heidelberg, according to his own account. He claimed to have come to America with \$5,000 in pocket money, and found his way first to Montana. On his arrival at San Francisco he entered the library. Leaving in 1874 to assume editorship of the *Overland Monthly* with Fisher, he was soon back in Bancroft's employ. Naturally he was the most able of the library corps. But while he was brilliant, handsome, and witty, he was at the same time erratic and unreliable. He died in 1884.)

Mr. Fisher's part was mythology, while the division of the work relating to language was given to Albert Goldschmidt, a German, who had been employed in the library since the end of 1871. (According to Nemos, Goldschmidt was said to have been the son of a Jewish clothing dealer at Hamburg. In early life he ran off to sea, and claimed to have become master of a vessel. He had acquired much general knowledge, and was musically inclined, often singing in church choirs. Before coming to the library Nemos says that he led a "vagrarious life" in Nevada. As a linguist he had great ability, and was able to translate almost any language which he encountered, but was inclined to fritter away his time. Nemos declared him "the most systematic idler in the library." This failing brought about his discharge. Later he became a mining superintendent in Chihuahua.) Mr. Oak took the subject of Antiquities and Aboriginal History (preface to *Native Races* I, p. 13).

The undertaking was an enormous one, because of the vast quantities of material to be handled, as well as the inexperience of the workers, which made it necessary for them to devise their own system as they proceeded. It is said that by an actual calculation the sum total of all the labor expended upon each of the five volumes of the

series represents an equivalent to the work of one man for ten years. (Literary Industries, 305) Indeed, Mr. Bancroft's own reason for entrusting this work to others is that it would have taken him a half century, leaving his main work untouched. Mr. Oak's indexing system proved a great labor saver, as by it the indexers went through all the material, classifying and making references. They were followed immediately by note-takers, who copied the facts indicated in these references. The writers then had the data placed before them for arrangement. When Mr. Bancroft's chapter on the Hyperboreans was completed he went over it with them, all making criticisms and suggestions to be adopted in the arrangement of the other divisions as well as that one. By this means was the library system perfected, a common method developed, and a corps of library workers trained: (Lit. Ind., 304).

The Native Races was very much in the nature of a compilation, and our knowledge concerning the authorship of its various parts is necessarily less exact than is true of any of the other Bancroft works. Such facts as are at hand come from two schedules—one of his own works, the other of that of the corps generally—prepared by William Nemos, a gifted Swedish writer who entered the library in 1873, subsequently becoming Oak's chief assistant, and ultimately his successor in the librarian's office; from separate information gained by Frances Fuller Victor as to the part of the work done by Oak. (This consists of three different statements, one in a letter to a friend, another in an autobiographical sketch, and a third in a statement copied by Mrs. Victor. Mr. Oak himself refuses to give testimony, doubtless on account of his former intimate personal connection with Mr. Bancroft and his acquiescence in the plan followed, as well as his poor health, which renders him unwilling

to enter into a discussion of the question, and from statements in an autobiography of Thomas Savage, chief Spanish interpreter in the library after August, 1873.)

The facts as deduced from these sources show that Oak wrote more of the *Native Races* than any one else, two fifths of the entire work, or to be exact, fifteen hundred and ninety-seven pages out of four thousand. While engaged in this writing, it must be remembered that he also acted as "chief assistant to Mr. Bancroft, manager of all details of this work, as well as that on the *History*, overseer of the corps of workers, and chief proof reader." duties which so engrossed his time that he wrote principally between eight o'clock in the evening and midnight. The fourth volume on *Antiquities* is his work entire, as is also the fifth on *Primitive History*, except the introductory chapter on the *Origin of the Americans*, in the preparation of which it would appear that Bancroft had a hand (*Lit. Ind.*, 570), and the last three chapters dealing with the tribes of Central America, the authorship of which the writer has no means of determining. Nemos says, however, that he prepared "a good deal of clean manuscript" for this volume as well as for some others.

To Harcourt the division of the field as already given points as the author of the second volume. Oak wrote the introductory chapter entitled *General View of the Civilized Nations*, and also the chapter on the *Aztec Picture Writing and Maya Arts-Calendar and Hieroglyphics*. Bancroft is the author of the chapter on *Savagism and Civilization*, and Nemos is to be credited with the writing of some parts. As Harcourt wrote six hundred and thirty-six pages of the *Native Races*, and there appears but one reference to his writing in connection with another volume, and that a chapter of a hundred and fifty pages, we

may conclude that the remainder of Volume II is from his pen.

With Fisher rests the credit for the authorship in the main of the Mythology portion of the third volume. Nemos relates that Fisher sought his aid for this work soon after he came to the library, believing that his previous training in philosophy fitted him for mythology, and that Fisher obtained for him the continuation of the volume, when in October, 1874, he left it "half finished" to accept the editorship of the *Overland Monthly*. Nemos then being new to the work, Harcourt revised his manuscript.

To Goldschmidt had been assigned the task of writing the treatise on Indian languages for the third volume. The evidence of Nemos shows that Goldschmidt prepared this part of the work, although the quotation from the Literary Industries already given seems to show that it was revised throughout once, and afterward rewritten, in part, at least, by Bancroft. Goldschmidt also prepared the ethnographical map of the coast.

Of the first volume, Oak wrote about half of the preface, and the chapter on the Columbians, Harcourt the chapter on the Californians, and Nemos and Savage the remainder, with the exception of a few slight parts prepared by others.

In a compilation like the *Native Races*, there was of necessity much matter printed in such a form that those who prepared it could not claim the authorship. Of this character were the contributions of Mr. Savage, the Spanish expert. Nemos also claimed to be the author of parts of every volume except the fourth, but from his own statements we learn that much of his work, like Savage's, consisted in making translations.

The public acknowledgment made in the introduction of this work concerning the part done by the several

writers would be fair, if we overlook the fact that its wording tends to give an exaggerated idea of Mr. Bancroft's part in it—were the name of the latter but printed on the title page as editor or compiler. But by omitting either word he has announced himself to the world as author. His own explanation for this seems to be that he considers himself responsible for the work in treatment and style (Native Races I, Preface XIII), but the real reason is no doubt to be found in a desire to give the work standing in the literary world by ascribing it to one name already quite widely known among book dealers and publishers.

As regards scientific merit these volumes can not make great claims. No serious attempt was made to collect facts concerning the American Indians of the West at first hand. Mr. Bancroft made no pretensions as an antiquarian or ethnologist, content with compiling what others had written and thus discharging his duty toward the introductory part of his work that he might the sooner take up the more serious task of writing the histories. Different parts of the Native Races differ greatly in value. Oak was habitually scholarly and always made an effort at honest research. Nemos was likewise thoroughly reliable. Goldschmidt was noted for his shiftlessness, and Fisher and Harcourt are charged with such uncritical methods as the incorporation in their writings of statements found in magazine articles which were nowhere verified. (Mrs. Victor had learned of this.) The last three must, therefore, be considered clever and brilliant writers rather than critical historians.

The chief value of the Native Races consisted in the fact that it presented in accessible form a classified collection of all the facts known concerning the Indians of the Pacific slope. Philosophers who made use of these facts in their generalizations, while prizing the work

highly, were not, however, especially concerned as to how it was written. In the East and in Europe the discovery was not made that it is merely a compilation. The *Native Races* was regarded as a work of great learning (see *Literary Industries*, 335, 356) and its authorship ascribed to Hubert Howe Bancroft in accordance with a literal reading of its title page. The five volumes were published at three-month intervals between October 1, 1874, and Christmas, 1875. Just before the first volume appeared, Mr. Bancroft made what he called a literary pilgrimage to the Eastern States to bring himself and the work to the notice of the great literary men there. He also made arrangements for publication in France and Germany simultaneously with the issuing of the volumes in New York. This was the result as told in his own words: "Never probably was a book so generally and so favorably reviewed by the best journals in Europe and America. Never was an author more suddenly or more thoroughly brought to the attention of literary men everywhere": (*Lit. Ind.*, 361.)

As director and manager of the *Native Races*, Mr. Bancroft performed a literary service of great importance and in such a capacity richly deserved the unsparing praise which was showered upon him. But the commendation and honor bestowed upon him as author of the work we must in all fairness regard as quite a different matter. According to his own statement (*Lit. Ind.*, 361), this must be considered as the status generally assigned him and the basis upon which he was presented with a number of complimentary certificates and honorary diplomas, among them being honorary membership in the Massachusetts Historical Society, the American Antiquarian Society, and the Buffalo Historical Society, and the honorary degree of Master of Arts at Yale.

So far as the question of authorship was concerned, all

reviews and general press mention of subsequent Bancroft publications followed along the same line as the reviews of the *Native Races*, recognizing Mr. Bancroft alone as the author. We may, therefore, conclude as does he himself (*Lit. Ind.*, 361, 661) that it was his being accredited with the authorship of the *Native Races* which made for him his literary reputation. It has been shown that this credit depended in turn upon the fact that his own name was on the title page as author instead of managing editor. The facts show, therefore, that Mr. Bancroft was assisted largely by his corps of writers even in the revision of manuscripts, that due credit has never been given Oak, Fisher, Harcourt, Goldschmidt, and Nemos, who, aided by a number of compilers and writers of fragmentary bits, are the true authors of the work, and that the rise of the fame of Hubert Howe Bancroft as an historical writer was founded upon a popular misconception, both as to the nature of his first work and his connection with that work.

Just as fast as the members of the library force ended their respective labors on the *Native Races*, they were set to work taking notes for the history, Mr. Oak continuing to act as manager of detail as heretofore. The system of note-taking was perfected by Mr. Nemos and now included a boiling down process by which new members could so prepare rough material as to permit writers to turn out manuscript more quickly.

Laying aside for the time being the work on Central America and Mexico, Bancroft and Oak decided to direct the activities of a library force now thoroughly trained to the material on California, since California history is the starting point for that of a number of other states, including Northern Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, and Utah, and more especially because the mass of original material collected for this state was greater than for any other, a

fact necessitating the reduction to a minimum of the possibility of its accidental destruction while yet unused: (Lit. Ind., 583.) The actual organization of the material on the Southwest, including the writing of the history of the Northern Mexican states and Texas down to 1800, together with the Spanish and Mexican annals of Arizona, New Mexico, California, and the Northwest Coast, was entrusted to Oak as his special field.

The story of the collection of this California material as told by Mr. Bancroft (Lit. Ind., 365 and sq.) is one of the most interesting connected with the history enterprise. In October, 1873, there had entered his service one Enrique Cerruti, an erratic individual, born in Italy, but intimately acquainted with the ways of Spanish-Americans through a long residence in Bolivia, under the government of which state he had served in a diplomatic capacity. Cerruti's diplomacy was turned toward the securing of historical facts in the possession of the old Spanish residents of California, and the first task set for his craft was to gain the coöperation of General Vallejo, a native Californian, early alcalde at San Francisco, and colonizer of Sonoma. After several months' negotiations, his efforts were rewarded by a personal narrative from Vallejo, by the gift of his papers, and by his enthusiastic support in gaining the aid of other Californians of his own race. Among those who furnished dictations at his instance were two of his brothers, and his nephew Alvarado, Governor of California under Mexican rule. For two years Cerruti and Vallejo worked together collecting, their time being divided between Sonoma, San Francisco, and Monterey, from which centers they made divers excursions. It seems that the wily Italian, together with other representatives of Mr. Bancroft, sometimes gained possession of valuable manuscripts by such indirection as

to cause much dissatisfaction on the part of the original owners.

The official Spanish records of the country which had been turned over to the United States Surveyor General at San Francisco consisted of four or five hundred volumes. To copy these, twelve Spaniards worked for a year under the direction of Mr. Savage,* "the greatest single effort" ever made in connection with the Bancroft enterprise. The mission records in possession of the archbishop of San Francisco were copied by Mr. Savage and three assistants in a month. In quest of data on Southern California, Bancroft and Oak took a trip to San Diego early in 1874, returning overland and visiting depositories of records. On this tour, Judge Benjamin Hays of San Diego turned over to Mr. Bancroft his historical collections, and subsequently directed the collecting in the south. The most efficient of the assistants employed by him was Edward F. Murray who, among other services, copied the records of the Santa Barbara missions. In March, 1877, Mr. Savage began work on the civil and ecclesiastical archives at Salinas, continuing the work at San José, Santa Cruz, and Sacramento. With others, he obtained dictations of the highest importance from native Californians and others, and in 1877 and 1878 spent eight months in that work, visiting all the missions from San Diego to San Juan Bautista with the exception of San Fernando and Purisima.

While his aids were thus gathering the material upon which the History of California is founded, Mr. Bancroft, as he tells us (Lit. Ind., 657-663), was devoting his attention more especially to the gaining of information concerning the proceedings of the two vigilance committees that held sway in San Francisco in the "fifties," by no

*This is on the authority of Savage.

means an easy task, since the acts of both of these organizations were illegal and their surviving members could not be expected to talk very freely, even after a lapse of twenty years. After considerable urging, however, those who had custody of the records were induced in the interest of history to turn them over for Mr. Bancroft's inspection. This material was made use of in the supplemental volumes on Popular Tribunals; in the first writing of which Mr. Bancroft was himself engaged from 1875 to 1877. Like his manuscript for Central America, however, this work had to be revised before its publication ten years later.

At an early date, Mr. Bancroft tells us (*Lit. Ind.*, 623-628), he had corresponded with the heads of governments lying within his territory. The presidents of the Mexican and Central American republics and the governors of all the states had accorded him every facility. In 1874, especially favorable letters were received from the presidents of Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, the latter appointing a special commissioner to secure and ship documents.

The great mass of California matter, at first so voluminous as to be appalling, was now in hand, and in 1878 Mr. Bancroft turned his attention to the Northwest. Upon a visit to British Columbia in that year, he obtained access to the official records of the province, took the reminiscences of many old fur traders, secured the papers of others, and had help from several who had undertaken to write a history of the country: (*Lit. Ind.*, 534; *Hist. N. W. Coast*, preface, viii). It was from this data that Mr. Bancroft in the years immediately following wrote, with the aid of some other writers, the *History of the Northwest Coast*, and the *History of British Columbia*, volumes constituting the great part of the work of which he can claim the actual authorship: (See *Lit. Ind.*, 549.)

The history seeker had already secured the writings of Gov. Elwood Evans of Washington Territory. Crossing the straits from Victoria, he made some collections about Puget Sound, and then went to Portland and Salem, accompanied by Amos Bowman, a stenographer who subsequently became one of the writers in the library and prepared some manuscript for the History of British Columbia. (Bowman was a Canadian with some experience in government surveys and mining explorations. Before joining Mr. Bancroft on this expedition, he was located at Anacortes, Washington.) The Oregon Pioneer Association was then in session at Salem, and a number of its members furnished dictations. The secretary, J. Henry Brown, was engaged to copy documents in the state archives (Lit. Ind., 540-546). He subsequently made this matter the basis of a book which he himself published on Oregon history.

After dictations had been secured in passing through Southern Oregon, the Oregon material at Mr. Bancroft's disposal was further increased on his return to San Francisco by the employment of Frances Fuller Victor, a writer of experience and author of several books on Oregon, who, during a residence of more than ten years in the state, had collected data with the intention of herself writing and publishing its history. As by her researches she had become familiar with the history of the entire northwestern part of the United States, the working up of this field was assigned her just as the southwest had been assigned to Oak.

(Frances Fuller was born in the township of Rome, New York, May 23, 1826. She was a near relation of Judge Reuben H. Walworth, Chancellor of the State of New York, and through her ancestor, Lucy Walworth, wife of Veach Williams, who lived at Lebanon, Connecticut, in the early part of the eighteenth century, claimed

descent from Egbert, the first king of England. Veach Williams himself was descended from Robert Williams, who came over from England in 1637, and settled at Roxbury, Massachusetts.

When Mrs. Victor was thirteen years of age, her parents moved to Wooster, Ohio, and her education was received at a young ladies' seminary at that place. From an early age she took an interest in literature, and when but fourteen years old, wrote both prose and verse for the county papers. A little later the *Cleveland Herald* paid for her poems, some of which were copied in English journals.

Mrs. Victor's younger sister, Metta, who subsequently married a Victor, a brother of Frances' husband, was also a writer of marked ability. Between the two a devoted attachment existed, and in those days they were ranked with Alice and Phœbe Carey, the four being referred to as Ohio's boasted quartet of sister poets. The Fuller sisters contributed verse to the *Home Journal* of New York City, of which N. P. Willis and George P. Morris were then the editors. Metta was known as the "Singing Sybil." Both sisters were highly eulogized by Willis, who regarded them as destined for a great future as writers.

In her young womanhood Frances spent a year in New York City, amid helpful literary associations. Being urged by their friends, the two sisters published together a volume of their girlhood poems in 1851. In the more rigorous self-criticism of later years, Mrs. Victor often called it a mistaken kindness which induced her friends to advise the publication of these youthful productions. But in these verses is to be seen the true poetic principle, and their earnestness is especially conspicuous.

Metta Fuller Victor, after her marriage, took up her residence in New York City, and continued her literary

work both in prose and in verse. Frances' husband, Henry C. Victor, a naval engineer, was ordered to California in 1863. She accompanied him, and for nearly two years wrote for the San Francisco papers, her principal contributions consisting of city editorials to the *Bulletin*, and a series of society articles under the *nom de plume* of Florence Faue, which, we are told, by their humorous hits, elicited much favorable comment.

About the close of the war, Mr. Victor resigned his position and came to Oregon, where his wife followed him in 1865. She has often told how, upon her first arrival in this state, she recognized in the type both of the sturdy pioneers and of their institutions something entirely new to her experience, and at once determined to make a close study of Oregon. As she became acquainted with many of the leading men of the state, and learned more and more about it, she determined to write its history, and began to collect material for that purpose.

Her first book on the history of Oregon was *The River of the West*, a biography of Joseph L. Meek, which was published in 1870. Many middle-aged Oregonians tell what a delight came to them when in boyhood and girlhood days they read the stories of Rocky Mountain adventures of the old trapper Meek as recited by this woman of culture and literary training, who herself had taken so great an interest in them. The book was thumbed and passed from hand to hand as long as it would hold together, and today scarcely a copy is to be obtained in the Northwest. Intensely interesting as *The River of the West* is, the chief value of the work does not lie in this fact, but rather in its value to the historian. Meek belonged to the age before the pioneers. It was the trapper and trader who explored the wilds of the West and opened up the way for the immigrant. Later writers freely confess their indebtedness to Mrs. Victor's *River*

of the West for much of their material. The stories of the Rocky Mountain bear killer, Meek, romantic though many of them are, check with the stories given by other trappers and traders, and furnish data for an important period in the history of the Northwest.

In 1872 was published Mrs. Victor's second book touching the Northwest, *All Over Oregon and Washington*. This work, she tells us in the preface, was written to supply a need existing because of the dearth of printed information concerning these countries. It contained observations on the scenery, soil, climate and resources of the Northwestern part of the Union, together with an outline of its early history, remarks on its geology, botany, and mineralogy, and hints to immigrants and travelers. Her interest in the subject led her at a later date to revise this book and to publish it again, this time under the title *Atlantis Arisen*.

In 1874 was published *Woman's War With Whiskey*, a pamphlet which she wrote in aid of the temperance movement in Portland. Her husband was lost at sea in November, 1875, and from this time, she devoted herself exclusively to literary pursuits. During her residence in Oregon she had frequently written letters for the *San Francisco Bulletin* and sketches for the *Overland Monthly*. These stories, together with some poems, were published in 1877 in a volume entitled *The New Penelope*.

This last volume was printed by the Bancroft publishing establishment in San Francisco. The Bancrofts were an Ohio family of Mrs. Victor's early acquaintance. Hubert Howe Bancroft now laid before her his plan for writing the history of the Pacific slope, and asked her to work on the part concerning Oregon. In 1878 she entered the Bancroft library. Leaving the library at the completion of the work, in 1890 she returned to Oregon and was employed by the state in 1893 to compile her

History of the Early Indian Wars of Oregon, a volume which was published by the State Printer the following year. She continued to write for the Oregon Historical Quarterly up to the time of her death. Her last published work was a small volume of poems printed in 1900, and selected from the many metrical compositions which she had written for newspapers and magazines through a period of sixty years. She was an able writer of essays, and possessed an insight into the evolution of civilization and government rare, not only for an author of her sex, but for any author. Combining the qualities of poet, essayist and historian, she occupied a position without a peer in the annals of Western literature. She died at Portland, Oregon, November 14, 1902).

Data on Alaska and the Russian Colony at Fort Ross, California, were being collected and translated during these years by Ivan Petroff, a highly educated Russian some time resident at Cook's Inlet. Material from Russia was furnished by the savant M. Pinart who had made a special study of Alaska, and Petroff prepared translations. In 1878 he visited Alaska in search of more material, and spent the year 1879 and part of 1880 in Washington extracting matter from papers, the existence of which he had discovered on the northern trip; (Lit. Ind., 551-561.) Petroff had begun the writing of this material and had done part of the Alaska volume when he left the library to become supervisor of the census of 1880 in the Northern Territory, leaving Mr. Bancroft and others to bring this part of the work to completion.

(The main facts of Petroff's life which had been a very eventful one are here taken from Bancroft's Literary Industries, 270-272. He was born at St. Petersburg in 1842, his father being a soldier. His mother died in his infancy, and at the age of five, he was placed in the military academy of the first corps of cadets at St. Peters-

burg. Left an orphan when but a boy by the death of his father at the battle of Inkerman, a remarkable talent for languages secured his transfer to the imperial academy of sciences for training as military interpreter. A serious illness caused an impediment in his speech which ended such prospects, but he was nevertheless permitted to continue his studies and became amanuensis for Professor Bohtink while engaged in the preparation of a Sanscrit dictionary. Attached subsequently to M. Brosset, who was making a study of Armenian antiquities and literature, he became so proficient in the language that he was chosen to accompany his superior on a two-year scientific expedition through Georgia and Armenia. He was then sent to Paris to St. Hilaire with part of the material obtained, thence sailing for New York in 1861. After working a short time on the *Courier des Etats Unis*, he enlisted in the seventh New Hampshire regiment. By hard study he mastered the language, after writing letters for the soldiers as a means of practice, and acquired a proficiency in the use of English such as one seldom meets with in a foreigner. From private he became corporal, then sergeant and color bearer, a rank which he held in 1864, when his company was sent to Florida. He took part in all the battles fought by Butler's army and was twice wounded. After the battle of Fort Fisher, he was promoted to a lieutenancy. Mustered out in July, 1865, he returned to New York, and accepted a position for five years with the Russian American Company at Sitka, believing that this region was sooner or later to pass to the United States. On the way to Alaska he was delayed and improved the time by making a horseback tour of Northern California, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. Finding his position filled when he arrived at Sitka, he was given charge of a trading post on Cook's

Inlet until the transfer of the territory to the United States in 1867. Subsequently Petroff was appointed acting custom officer on Kodiak Island and was put in charge of the seized barkentine Constitution, with which he arrived in San Francisco in October, 1870. Mr. Bancroft at once sought his services as Russian interpreter for the library. After his return to the government service in the north, he distinguished himself both in 1880 and 1890 by his zeal in securing information concerning Alaska desired by the census bureau, and several times risked his life in this service. Returning to Washington he was subsequently employed both by the census bureau and the state department. With one exception, the Utah volume, this was the last of the series of history proper to the actual authorship of any considerable part of which Mr. Bancroft can lay claim.)

So great was the opposition created among Gentiles in Utah by a turn in the Bancroft history more favorable to the Mormons than they considered fair, and so many and so fierce the charges against Mr. Bancroft in consequence, that he has apparently been very careful to give, in the Literary Industries (pp. 631-640), an extended account of the manner of collecting the material for the History of Utah. Here he tells us that, at an early date in the development of the history project, he realized the difficulty of gaining data on Mormon history, an obstacle apparently so great as to be insuperable. For though the Mormon church have a regular historian, whose duty it is to preserve their archives, the director of the Bancroft project at once perceived the objections which would be made to the turning of this material over to be written up by one not in sympathy with their faith. But he must have seen very clearly that a Gentile history of Utah not unfavorable to the Mormons was the one thing they desired above all else. Accordingly, in 1880, he tells us

that he succeeded in showing to their satisfaction that he was not prejudiced against them, and asked Orson B. Pratt, official historian of the Mormon church, for the desired information. John Taylor, president of the church, called a council of its twelve apostles, with the result that it was agreed to comply with the request, and Franklin D. Richards was sent to San Francisco as Professor Pratt's representative, to furnish the Bancroft library with such material as was desired from the official church records.

The year 1880 is an important one for the history project in another and more important respect also. The end of that year found definite plans made for the publication of the History of the Pacific States. Mr. Bancroft had long since decided that, unlike the Native Races, this work should be handled exclusively by his own house, and Mr. Nathan J. Stone was placed in charge of the publication department of the firm, now A. L. Bancroft and Company, to attend especially to this matter. The date of commencement of work by the printers Oak sought to have deferred that there might be no haste in searching out and digesting facts, but against his advice Bancroft determined to begin the publication of the series in 1882, impatient doubtless at the prospect of a deferred return from his large financial investment in the work, and somewhat fearful, as he tells us, lest through some calamity it might never come to publication.

This decision for an early beginning of publication with the general change in plan which it brought, rendered Mr. Oak's complicated tasks too severe, as he was now in failing health. The work of taking notes on the vast amount of material on California and the Spanish Southwest generally had been finished some time before, and, as Oak had now completed his preliminary researches, he determined to give up part of his duties that

he might have time to write the volume covering his field. To Mr. Nemos, who up to this time had been employed chiefly on the Mexican volumes, was accordingly turned over the general direction of the half-dozen younger writers, together with the plans of writing, and the management of the note-takers, a change which gave him all interior supervision except over special departments attended to by Mr. Bancroft—such as the work of Oak and Mrs. Victor. Nemos had wonderful ability for drilling men into a common method and served as director of library detail “with remarkable ability and success.”

(This was Oak’s expression. All who speak of Nemos have much commendation for his ability. He was born in Finland, February 23, 1848, the son of a nobleman. German and piano lessons were first given him by his mother, who belonged to a wealthy family of good stock. After a year’s study in a private school at St. Petersburg, he returned home to attend school, and later took a course at the gymnasium, or classic high school, at Stockholm preparatory to entering Upsala university, where a brother was at the time in attendance.

This ambition was not to be attained, however, for in his seventeenth year, family matters compelled him to give up his studies, and a place for him was found in a London commission and ship-broker’s office by a family friend who believed that the acquisition of English and a business experience would be of the greatest advantage to the young man. Rather than drag the family title into the by-ways of trade, he laid it aside and assumed the name of Nemos.

Evening and leisure hours were now devoted to the study of philosophy and kindred higher branches under an Upsala graduate. After a business training of eighteen months, he was transferred to a responsible position in a house trading with India. When five years had been

spent in this capacity, the fear of consumption induced him to take a long sea voyage, and in the spring of 1870 he left Liverpool by sailing vessel for Australia, arriving at Melbourne in the third month out. A venture at mining resulted disastrously through the dishonesty of his partners, and after a stop at Sydney, he came to San Francisco, where he landed in the summer of 1871. He had completed an engagement as assistant civil engineer on a proposed railroad in Oregon when he returned to California and accepted a position in the library. Nemos is described as retiring in all his tastes and enthusiastic as a student. He was especially fond of philosophy and languages, and had a knowledge of all the principal tongues of Europe.)

Oak, although he now considered himself chief only in name, still acted as librarian, business agent for most of the intercourse with the printing house, and reviser of the final proofs of all the volumes.

For protection against fire, the library was in October, 1881, moved to a building constructed for its reception on Valencia Street. At the same time, the printers began work on the first volume to be published, *Central America I*, which was immediately followed by *Mexico I*. After that time Mr. Bancroft (*Lit. Ind.*, 585,) gave out for the press whatever was most convenient, so that frequently parts of several volumes were in type at one time. When the printing began, material aggregating fifteen volumes was ready. These included manuscript for *Mexico* and *Central America*, the field assigned Savage and Nemos, matter prepared by Oak for *California*, by Mrs. Victor for *Oregon*, by Bancroft for *Popular Tribunals*, *Literary Industries*, and *The Northwest Coast*, and by Petroff for *Alaska*. Bancroft estimated at this time that the notes were also taken for three fourths of the works which were yet to be written.

Material upon which to base the remaining fourth was collected in the same way as previously, Mr. Bancroft visiting the country to be written up, ascertaining the nature and location of the materials, collecting what could be had conveniently, and then leaving the further ingathering in the hands of agents. A visit to Mexico in 1883 furnished him with some material on social conditions in that country which he tells us was utilized in the last volume of the Mexican history: (Lit. Ind., 701). More extensive collections remained to be made in the regions farther north.

After the completion of the two volumes on Oregon, Mrs. Victor's attention was next directed to the volume on Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming. In the carrying on of this work, a greater number of suggestions as to manner of treatment were made by Mr. Bancroft, we may believe, than was usual in the preparation of a volume, for the reasons that it was hurried more for publication than earlier works, that it was written under his immediate direction, and that he himself collected and forwarded material from the field as required. The record of the progress of the work, as it occurs in Mr. Bancroft's letters to the writer of the volume, is of unusual interest in that the methods followed, though in some ways exceptional, may perhaps be taken as fairly typical of those employed by Mr. Bancroft in the preparation of the later volumes of the series which he immediately supervised.

In August, 1884, shortly before the completion of the second volume of the History of Oregon, Mr. Bancroft went to Salt Lake City, where he left with Franklin D. Richards a memorandum to guide him in extracting material on the Mormons in Nevada which, he said, would be about the first material needed. Pending the arrival of this, on September 11th, he advised Mrs. Victor to familiarize herself with the history of Wyoming and

Colorado, he himself having done the same for Nevada.

A letter written a few days later presents the idea of making a plan of the volume "as the men do on Mexico, etc.," and says, "By so doing you can give each section its due proportion and by working to the plan save unnecessary labor." As to the method of treating early expeditions to Colorado and Wyoming, he says to consult the History of Utah; and the two opening chapters which he himself had already written on Nevada. When these chapters were prepared, it was the intention to devote an entire volume to this state. In planning the work as recommended in this letter, Mrs. Victor ascertained that these chapters were out of proportion for the volume as now planned, and wrote to Mr. Bancroft to this effect. On September 21st, however, he advised her that he recognized the fact, but that they would "have to do." On the same date he forwarded the dictations of three of the first Mormons in Nevada, requesting that when the material had been used for this volume, they be turned over to Mr. Bates, then at work on the History of Utah. He also suggested a perusal of Benton's City Saints and other Utah books for light on Nevada, and directed that Mr. Newkirk search the library thoroughly for Nevada material.

From Colorado Springs on October 7th he wrote announcing that a package of material on Colorado had been sent, though evidently with more thought of pleasing those who furnished the dictations than of affording material for the history of their state. Said he, "Some of the dictations don't amount to much, but I would like them used for all they are worth, and more too, putting them in list of authorities, quoting them freely, and giving biographical notice, etc." On October 11th, he wrote that he would go to Denver in a few days to finish gathering what material for Colorado he could procure. With

reference to this he says, "I am told that there is no file of the *Rocky Mountain News*, or any other early paper I can get. Possibly I may obtain access to one. Still I think we will have stuff enough, all there will be room for. "I will then go to Cheyenne to get what I can on Wyoming, and that will finish up the business of gathering for that volume, or any other volume except what the canvassers bring in."

He calls attention to the fact that in the Colorado dictations there is frequently material on Montana, and in the Utah dictations, material on Idaho and Nevada. The reason for this he gives in the typical Bancroft sentence:

"If I strike a man here, as I frequently do, who has been to these other places in early times I follow him up there for all it is worth of course, the same as here."

At Colorado Springs Mrs. Helen Hunt Jackson, author of a *Century of Dishonor*, asked Mr. Bancroft to adopt her views on the Colorado Indian wars. With reference to this matter, he wrote on October 13th, the day of his departure for Denver, as follows:

"She wishing a thing done would be the very reason I would not do it if I could help it. I speak of it that you may get the work and use the information. I do not care about mentioning her name one way or another in the whole work. She has been polite enough here, although she has a broken leg, but I don't care for her politeness. I should have had fair recognition for the service I did her in the matter of her California articles in the *Century* which I never got."

Writing subsequently from Denver on November 2d, he says: "Everybody in Colorado, nearly, is against Mrs. Jackson on what some call the Chevington massacre. That side don't call it a massacre, but a fight. I should give their side in full, then say some few took exception

to this action, and there let it stand on its merits — that is, I think so now.”

In the same letter Mr. Bancroft announced that he was going over the *Rocky Mountain News* with Mr. Byers, the founder and former editor, “a man of remarkable ability and memory,” whose dictation to a shorthand reporter was given, he said, in such a way that it was almost pure history and could be taken from his manuscript as fast as one could write. This he advised Mrs. Victor to take as a basis for Colorado history, building upon it and giving it the preference in regard to discrepancy of statement. He also called attention to the fact that “a lot of people” had in one way and another wandered over the region before white men settled there, and said he supposed that what Coronado did should first be considered. As to the wanderings of Spaniards in Colorado, a schedule sent about this time refers Mrs. Victor to all Oak had written on the subject, to the first few pages of the History of Utah, and to the original authorities upon which the latter was based. After calling attention to some works of travel, such as Fremont’s writings and Renton’s *Adventures in Mexico and the Rocky Mountains*, he asked Mr. Nemos to see that the material for Mrs. Victor’s use in preparing the volume be taken out more thoroughly than had heretofore been the case, and upon this point directed him to consult the early volumes of the series and make this correspond. Mrs. Victor subsequently asked that she be permitted to take out her own notes, and the request was granted as Mr. Bancroft had now decided to reduce the number of his force as fast as possible and bring the work to a conclusion. Already on October 25th, he had given as his opinion that Colorado should make about half of the volume, at the same time inquiring what laws of Colorado and Wyoming were desired, and recommending a study of “Hepworth Dixon’s

work on the Great West, Bonneville's Adventures, and Bayard Taylor's Travels."

Writing from Cheyenne on November 8th, Mr. Bancroft announced the shipment of a small package of Wyoming stuff, all that he had been able to secure, and also his intention to have some one take matter from the office files of the newspapers of that place, the *Sun* and *Leader*, the latter of which was very complete. Though returning himself to Denver, that day, he promised to have more Wyoming dictations taken.

In a letter dated the next day, he expressed the opinion that a proper division of the work would be made by devoting three hundred and fifty pages to Colorado, two hundred and twenty-five to Nevada, and one hundred and seventy-five to Wyoming, and requested that the writing be done on that basis until some change should be found necessary. In closing, he suggests another line of research to be carried through the volume in the words: "And all the way from the Gulf of Mexico to British Columbia, I want to pay special attention to the cattle interest and cattle men, the origin and development of the industry, one of the most marvelous and important of modern times."

The last letter dealing with the manner of treatment of material dated October 9, 1885, asks Mrs. Victor to do the best she can with Mackey and the silver question in order to satisfy Mr. Stone, the publishing agent, whose work, Mr. Bancroft said, was hard enough at best.

It thus appears that three leading objects were kept constantly in mind at this time: one, the handling of the various subjects in such a way as not to displease the people in the district written up, that the work might be popular and the work of the canvassers easy as they went about soliciting subscriptions for it; another, the writing of the various chapters in such a way that the first

draft would constitute finished history and take up no more space than that assigned in the volume ; and finally, and really at the bottom of the preceding, a desire to have the history written as soon as possible. Evidence that Mr. Bancroft wished to have the work done in the least possible time and with the least possible cost is abundant in these letters.

In October Nemos had been set to counting the pages which Mrs. Victor had written since entering the library, a proceeding which she resented, believing that it afforded no just basis for judging her historical work. The next letter from Mr. Bancroft, on October 20th, brought the request that she bring the work "at first writing within the requisite compass so as not to make it so terribly costly." An intimation that greater haste would be pleasing was again conveyed on November 1st, when Mr. Bancroft expressed the confidence that if Mrs. Victor were to write three volumes more, they would be done in three years instead of six, a view of the case most contrary to hers, since before entering the library she had already worked out many of the problems in Oregon history, and now that she was entering upon another field, found more time necessary. That Mr. Bancroft did not make allowance for this, however, is shown by a letter written on November 17th. Here he begins the subject by stating that it would be a great mistake to suppose that he was dissatisfied with Mrs. Victor's work, or that any one had in the faintest degree criticised it, and says that all he wants is to practice such economy of time and money as will enable him to complete the work before he is dead or has failed in business. Then he proceeds to reckon up results thus :

"I do not know when the present volume will be finished ready for the printer. - But six years have already passed, and, calling this volume done, it would be two

years to a volume. About fifteen hundred of your pages make a volume, I believe, and counting three hundred days to the year, would be two and a half pages a day. When you first came, you started off with ten pages, which we all thought rapid, but the outcome makes it exceedingly small. This, with what other work has been done on your volumes, would make every page of your manuscript ready for the printer cost me considerably over two dollars a page."

After a denial that this is intended as a complaint about the past, he says :

"Go on and do the best you can. I have written equivalent to six volumes during the last six years besides devoting my time to revising and outside matters. But I don't expect any one to work as I do. I am not satisfied with old hands now, however, who do not give me say, four or five pages a day all ready for the printer."

According to the printed rules of the library, the hours were from 7.15 sharp to 6 o'clock in the evening, with half an hour for lunch. When we recall the complexity and minuteness of research and thought necessary in historical writing, we must consider three hundred such days a year heavy work. The requirement of an average of a certain number of pages a day was therefore one which would naturally tend to increase the worry of the writer. This requirement was also exacted of Mr. Oak, and we may well conclude that if such pressure were brought to bear on the two most experienced writers in the library, upon the junior writers it must have been intense indeed.

The writing of the volume on Colorado, Nevada, and Wyoming, so far as the material at hand permitted, was completed at the end of the year 1885. With all of the precautions taken, however, the pages on Colorado had to be condensed nearly a third to bring them within the

space allowed. This was done, as was frequently the case, by throwing matter into fine type and printing as footnotes, instead of making many changes in the manuscript.

The system of biographical footnotes as it appears in the history, Mrs. Victor claimed as her contribution to the general plan of the work. The idea was followed with excellent results in her own volumes as well as those written by others, the object being to make biographical mention for the benefit of posterity of every man who took a prominent part in the building of a Pacific state or territory. For carrying out such a purpose, the time of writing during the lives of at least part of the same generation that founded these commonwealths, offered unusually good advantages.

The original intention, Mrs. Victor has told us, was for her to prepare the volume on Utah, since before coming to the coast, she had had occasion to make a study of early Mormon history through coming in contact with some refugees from Nauvoo. But so much work had already been assigned her that when the time came to do the writing, this was impossible. Mr. Bancroft had already made a study of the early Spanish history of the territory, and had written this part when he assigned the work on the bulk of the remainder to Mr. Alfred Bates, a writer of polished English and a man of scholarly attainments who had previously assisted Mr. John S. Hittell in his work on *The Commerce and Industries of the Pacific Coast*. (From *Literary Industries*, 267-68, we learn that Bates was a native of Leeds, England, born May 4, 1840. His father was a wool stapler who lost his fortune in the panic of 1847. Compelled at an early age to earn his own livelihood, he began teaching at the age of fifteen, and later taught at Marlborough College of which the dean of Westminster was then head. To him

young Bates became private secretary in 1862. While preparing for Cambridge the following year, he accepted a lucrative position in New South Wales, where he suffered much from ill health, at one time being given up by three doctors. An offer of a position as teacher in California took him thither and he continued at this work for a year. During the two years spent with Mr. Hittell, he was the most valued of his assistants.) Those acquainted with the circumstances and the men have accordingly held that certain incidents in Utah history unfavorable to the Mormons could not have been toned down by Bates as they are in the printed volume, and that the Mormon turn to the work was therefore given by Bancroft in the pages which he wrote and in his revision of Bates' work. (See article by Frances Fuller Victor in *Salt Lake Tribune* of April 14, 1893.) This seems probable from what Mr. Bancroft tells us of his efforts to secure material for the volume from the Mormon church, as well as his natural desire to please subscribers to the work.

Mr. Nemos, who was a foreigner, had no preference as to the field in which his writing was done, and it was consequently scattered through different volumes. Besides collaborating with Mr. Savage and others on the Mexican and Central American volumes, he wrote part of the material on British Columbia and Alaska. By the time Mrs. Victor's third volume was completed at the end of the year 1885, Oak had completed his work on the North Mexican States and the five volumes on California under Spanish and Mexican rule. The writing of the two volumes containing the American portion of California history was thereupon assigned to Mrs. Victor and Nemos, the former assuming responsibility for the preparation of the political chapters, a field in which her work had been pronounced especially good, and the latter tak-

ing up the institutional chapters, a part which he had largely fulfilled toward all the Spanish volumes of the history.

The introduction of the institutional feature is to be accredited to Nemos. The writing done by Oak was in the form of annals, a form in general suited admirably to the provincial records which he worked up; but against such a style throughout the series, Nemos tells us that he presented suggestions and arguments to Mr. Bancroft for introducing material which should tell the history of the people, and that in this he prevailed.

In April, 1886, the burning of the Bancroft business house threatened temporarily to bring the history project to an abrupt termination at a time when only the first volumes had been published, but the enterprise soon recovered from the blow. Under the leadership of Mr. Bancroft, both business and history writing went on as before, the firm of Bancroft and Company being organized for the conduct of the former, while the publication of the history previously carried on as a department of the general book concern was now turned over to The History Company, a corporation organized by Mr. Bancroft for the purpose of handling the work.

At the completion by Oak of his volume on New Mexico and Arizona in May, 1887, he retired from the library with health very much shattered, leaving Mr. Nemos at the head of affairs. After spending some time on a new work now undertaken by Mr. Bancroft, the latter also severed his connection with library matters in August, 1888.

At the time of Oak's departure, Bancroft was planning a biographical work to be issued at the conclusion of the task which was then engaging the attention of the library force. This work, at first called *Chronicles of the Kings*, but published under the title *Chronicles of the Builders*

of the Commonwealths, was to present in detail the lives of wealthy and influential men who had borne a prominent part in the affairs of the various Pacific Coast states. For such notice they were charged from a thousand to ten thousand dollars according to the length of the published sketch. (This is according to the printed schedule, the minimum price being paid for three pages print, the maximum for thirty. This included also the printing of a portrait engraved on steel.) The attempt to burden the prestige gained by the histories and their projector with such a load could result only in crippling both. The volumes printed subsequent to the inauguration of this scheme could not be received with the same open-mindedness as former works. The information subsequently made public that money was accepted for notice in the *Chronicles* lost for Mr. Bancroft the regard of the press of the coast, caused grave doubts to be expressed concerning his disinterestedness as an historian, called out an expression of many bitter — in some cases utterly false — statements concerning his work, and sadly damaged the literary reputation he had been for nearly twenty years building on the work done under his direction.

While it was inevitable that the publication of the *Chronicles* as a parasite upon the history should result thus disastrously and deplorably for the fame of the latter work, we must not fail to recognize the fact that the labors of the writers upon both works were not a whit less conscientious and painstaking than they had always been. After the sixth and seventh volumes of the California history were completed in 1888, the volume on Washington, Idaho, and Montana was written. In 1890, the final volume on California was published, followed in the next year by the supplementary volumes, *Essays and Literary Industries*, which ended twenty years of library work for Hubert Howe Bancroft and his assistants.

The History of the Pacific States, we have seen, was an evolution, passing through the stages of handbook and encyclopædia before it became a history. But when the last idea had been reached, the development of the project was by no means complete, but rather just begun. The necessity of the Native Races was demonstrated before work had proceeded for a twelve-month. As late as 1878, Mr. Bancroft estimated that the history proper would comprise but fourteen volumes at the outside.

In his letter to Mrs. Victor, dated August 1st of that year, we get an interesting glimpse of the plan in an earlier stage. The work is to be divided, he says, somewhat in the following manner: Conquest of Darien, one volume; Conquest of Mexico, one volume; Mexico under the Viceroy, two volumes; Mexican Revolution and Modern History, one or two; Explorations Northward and the History of California, three or four; the Northwest Coast, Oregon and British Columbia together, two or three; Alaska, one. Under the head of California history was to be included somewhere the histories of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Nevada, and the history of Oregon was likewise to include Washington, Idaho, and Montana. Oregon and British Columbia he thought could be written in a year. Not until six more years had passed was it finally recognized that natural expansion as the work proceeded would necessitate devoting to the series of history proper a number of volumes exactly double that which was then contemplated. To this series were added as a supplement an even half dozen volumes.

If we find that the outline grew from that of a few volumes in 1872 to one of almost forty in 1884, and that the work expanded fourteen volumes after it had been definitely laid out, we are not at all surprised that the part of the whole which Mr. Bancroft intended to write grew

relatively less as time went on, and the part assigned to others became correspondingly greater. There is some evidence to show that when writing began on the first volume of the Central American History in 1873, the director of the project actually had in mind the plan which he gives in the *Literary Industries*, that of writing with the aid of assistants who were to be responsible for "the study and reduction of certain minor sections" which he was to "employ" in his own writing. Thus we find, according to the information left by Nemos, that Bancroft actually wrote half of the volume, that Oak at first took out notes, and that Nemos prepared his work in the rough, leaving a considerable part of it to be rewritten. For the next volume undertaken, the first of the six on Mexico, we see that the chief was unable to prepare so much material in its final form, and rested with but two chapters completely to his credit, together with the rewriting of part of Nemos' work on the remainder. In four or five years, he expresses the determination of writing what he can himself and leaving the rest to his aids. This as we shall see amounted in the end to his doing about one seventh of the history, slightly revising the work of the other authors, often by the aid of critics in his employ, and preparing most of the material for the supplementary volumes.

Thus it came about that the original plan, the plan as published, was exactly reversed, and instead of Mr. Bancroft's doing all the work in final form, except some minor sections assigned to those whom he called his assistants, it was the so-called assistants who really wrote the History of the Pacific States, and Mr. Bancroft who did a few minor, or at any rate less difficult parts. Nor is it at all true, as one authority has said (*Appleton's Encyclopaedia of American Biography*, I, 156), that Mr. Bancroft wrote the most important chapters. Of course, the sur-

prising thing about this is that Mr. Bancroft should have stated in the *Literary Industries* that he had followed a plan for the division of labor originally intended, but not followed at all. Especially unfortunate is this, in view of repeated charges of absorbing the literary reputation of his collaborators and aids, and appropriating the credit for their work.

It has long since been recognized that the name of Hubert Howe Bancroft can not be placed in the ranks of great American historical writers. In the first place, he wrote only parts of volumes. It will be observed, too, that as a rule he wrote simpler parts, consisting of synopses of early voyages, or annals easy to handle, such as the roving of Spaniards in Utah, or the rise of a provincial government among the fur-traders of British Columbia. But Mr. Bancroft, as founder of the library and organizer of the history, has rendered a real and lasting service to historical literature.

The first great end subserved by his undertaking was the preservation of a great mass of invaluable historical material, which would otherwise have been lost. In 1880, he wrote :

There are men yet living who helped to make our history, and who can tell us what it is better than their sons, or than any who shall come after them. A score of years hence few of them will remain. Twenty years ago, many parts of our territory were not old enough to have a history ; twenty years hence, much will be lost that may now be secured" : (*Lit. Ind.*, 635).

It is thus for the timeliness of his labors in collecting his library that the Pacific Coast, and the whole world as well, is indebted to Mr. Bancroft. For this work his qualifications as a successful business man experienced in handling books were exactly those required.

A second great end which Mr. Bancroft attained was

the founding of a history of Western North America on the original sources which he had collected in order that it might constitute a foundation upon which future histories would be built.

"He who shall come after me," says he in the letter quoted above, "will scarcely be able to undermine my work by laying another and deeper foundation. He must build upon mine or not at all, for he can not go beyond my authorities for facts. He may add to or alter my work, for I shall not know or be able to tell everything, but he can never make a complete structure of his own."

That the volumes supervised by Mr. Bancroft should contain imperfections is in the nature of the case inevitable. Perfect historical estimates of contemporaries can not as a rule be made, and history based largely on personal reminiscence must contain errors of refraction which can be corrected only in the clearer light of later years. The handling of material by a writer who did not collect it, and who is likely to find the places and conditions dealt with strange to his experience, inevitable though it be in so large an undertaking, results in the writing of faulty history. The hastening of the work and the editorial revision of manuscripts by a manager desirous of pleasing subscribers, and impelled by various other motives of his own, are not circumstances likely to increase the accuracy of the work. But after allowance has been made for all inaccuracies which have crept in through these various avenues, we still have the fact that the histories are based upon sources which may be supplemented but can never be displaced. No greater mistake could be made, therefore, than to say that because they contain errors they are worthless. All must agree with the practical argument made by a thoughtful old pioneer of the writer's acquaintance that, in spite of all criticisms which may be passed upon the Bancroft his-

ories, they contain a great fund of information which is nowhere else to be found in print.

A third result of the history plan, and one which is of importance to historical writers everywhere who have large fields to cover, was the devising of a cooperative method for organizing the vast collections in the library. Mr. Bancroft makes the claim of having been the first to resort to such a division of labor; and points out (*Literary Industries*, 767) that his method avoids the repetition of details and insures a more thorough working up of the field than does the cooperative method as the term is usually understood, under which the writers work independently of each other after the field is divided. Such a claim might indeed be granted had Mr. Bancroft announced himself as editor and reviser instead of author, and had he designated the part of the work written by each of his collaborators in accordance with the usual custom in cooperative works. The printing of his name as author on the title page, and his general recognition as such in accordance with press notices following those of the *Native Races*, have, of course, largely lost for him the credit of originating a cooperative method for the organizing of large quantities of material.

Concerning the understanding Mr. Bancroft had with his corps of writers generally as to the public acknowledgment of their work which he would make, information is not at hand. Only one had ever before written and published a book, and perhaps the majority gave no thought to the rights which would be theirs as authors. Certain it is that when the greater number of the more prominent writers entered the library, the work was planned on a much smaller scale than that upon which it was carried out, and, as they did not know that they were to become the authors of entire or consecutive volumes, the question was not then of the importance which

it assumed with the later growth of the series. What the understanding was with those who first entered the library we can not say definitely, but his ideas on that subject seems to have been a survival of the encyclopaedia project. To Mrs. Victor, just prior to her entering his service, he wrote on August 1, 1878 :

“The work is wholly mine. I do what I can myself, and pay for what I have done over that ; but I father the whole of it and it goes out only under my name. All who work in the library do so simply as my assistants. Their work is mine to print, scratch, or throw in the fire. I have no secrets ; yet I do not tell everybody just what each does. I do not pretend to do all the work myself, that is, to prepare for the printer all that goes out under my name. I have three or four now who can write for the printer after a fashion ; none of them can suit me as well as I can suit myself.” One or two only will write with very little change from me. All the rest require sometimes almost rewriting.”

He further adds that it gives him pleasure to acknowledge his obligations to his assistants, but that this acknowledgment is always voluntary on his part and not claimed as a right by them, and says that while he is not sure of mentioning certain persons in connection with certain parts as he had done in the introduction to the *Native Races*, he will certainly not do more than that. The only mention which he promises definitely to his writers is a biographical notice in the *Literary Industries*.

“The work in the library,” says he, “good or bad, is mine ; were it not so, I would simply do what I could with my own fingers, or do nothing.”

It is easy enough to see why Mr. Bancroft should wish to have absolute control of manuscripts to insure good work, and a complete covering of the field, but it is difficult to see how he could justly make the claim before

the world that manuscripts turned out by other persons were his writing.

Not only was the myth of Mr. Bancroft's authorship repeated on the title page of each volume of the history, and in the reviews which built upon the prestige gained by him as supposed author of the *Native Races*, but not a word was printed to show that any one else wrote the least part of the work. When asked to indicate in the preface the part done by each person, according to the evidence of a number of his writers, he always declared that this was just the one thing he wished to avoid. The only approach to an acknowledgment is the statement in the preface in words which apparently refer only to indexers and note-takers, that he has been "able to utilize the labors of others," among whom as the most faithful and efficient he mentions Oak, Nemos, Savage, Petroff, and Mrs. Victor. (*History of Central America*, I, preface viii). The promise is made that he will speak of these and others at length elsewhere, and this promise is redeemed by the printing of their biographies in the *Literary Industries* without indicating who was engaged in writing and who in purely routine work connected with the library, much less designating what parts of the work each had done. From a popular edition of this volume subsequently issued for wider circulation, even these were stricken out.

While the real authors of the history never agreed to keep silence concerning their right to recognition, it was very well understood that they would remain in Mr. Bancroft's employ only so long as they acquiesced in his claiming the work as solely his own and made no individual claims for themselves. This bread and butter argument for silence proved effective in all cases. An example of the method in meeting claims made for any of the library writers occurs in connection with the pub-

lication of the History of Oregon. A notice of the work just before it was issued was sent to the Oregon press and the statement made that Mrs. Victor was the author. (Emma H. Adams in *Portland Oregonian*, October 5, 1886, under the title, "Mrs. Victor and Her Latest Literary Work.") This was met by Mr. Bancroft with a letter for publication in the paper printing the notice, in which he asserted that no entire volume of the series had been written by Mrs. Victor. Of course the significance of this statement is in the word "entire," which simply meant that he had interpolated a line here and there as he went over the manuscript. A note to Mrs. Victor under date of October 16th explains this apparent denial of her authorship thus :

"I do not want for myself the credit due to my assistants. At the same time, I do not deem it necessary to explain to the public just what part of the work was done by each. Everybody knows that you have been at work on Oregon, and that is all right, although I have done considerable work on your manuscript for better or worse, or at all events to make it conform to the general plan."

In view of Mr. Bancroft's persistent refusal to give "assistants" anything like credit for their work in accord with general custom and literary ethics as well, and in view of the fact that this refusal meant that the public would credit him solely as the author, it must have been a difficult matter for him to convince his corps of writers that he did not want the credit due them.

The process of making Mrs. Victor's manuscripts conform to the general plan, which is here regarded as the principal source of alteration, according to Oak, meant nothing except the condensation of her work, mainly by the omission of considerable portions, in order to bring it within the space assigned. That such revision did not affect her claims to authorship, is of course apparent.

It is sufficiently clear, from what appears above, that Mr. Bancroft's public justification of himself for publishing under his own name all the work done in the library is the fact that he reserved the right to alter all manuscripts and make what changes he saw fit. This made him managing editor, however, not author. The comparatively few additions he made to the manuscripts can not justify such a claim. That the revision of Mrs. Victor's work consisted in the main of nothing more than leaving out parts appears from two cases already cited, one in connection with the History of Colorado, Nevada, and Wyoming, the other with the History of Oregon, as well as from the direct statements of those who supervised library work. As we have seen he demanded that his writers turn out a certain number of pages a day "all ready for the printer," so he could have had little occasion to revise their work. The writers who Mr. Bancroft said in 1878 wrote with very little change from him were of course Oak and Nemos. Now Oak wrote seven and a half volumes of the history, and Nemos and Mrs. Victor five each, while Bancroft wrote four—a total of at least twenty-two volumes out of the twenty-eight to the authorship of which no serious claim could be made on the ground of altered manuscripts. Moreover, Savage says in his autobiography that, while Bancroft made additions and amendments to the three volumes which he wrote, in some of his pages only a word or two was changed and that others remained intact. What rewriting was occasionally done on the remaining volumes, was apparently done as often by other persons as by Mr. Bancroft. His relation toward the work was therefore exactly the same as that of a managing editor toward the matter printed in a newspaper. The latter could never claim the authorship of the articles

written by his staff, although altered to a considerable extent by him or by his direction.

It should be stated here that Mr. Bancroft justified his course to those in the library by insisting that they furnished him merely with rough notes, and that it would be necessary for him to rewrite the work, or at any rate, considerable portions of it. This, had it been done, would have been strictly in accord with the account of his connection with the work as printed in the *Literary Industries*. But it was not done, and the account as printed is incorrect.

Since the completion of the history, but one of the writers has publicly claimed the authorship of the volumes written in the library. Ill health, only too common with those who labored through the work, has in most cases been a sufficient barrier to such action. Savage and Bates remained in Mr. Bancroft's employ for a number of years engaged in other work, and of course under such circumstances could not make any claims. Nemos as a foreigner could not be expected to take much interest in such matters, and his early return to Europe and subsequent residence there have rendered it difficult for him to make such a statement did he so desire. Mrs. Victor alone has printed a general statement of the portions of the history written by her, a course in which she was influenced by years of absolute independence in directing her literary energies before entering Mr. Bancroft's employ, and a consequent appreciation of the rights and honors of authorship. Four volumes of the Bancroft histories were exhibited as her work at the Mechanics Pavilion in San Francisco during the fair in January, 1893, and also among a collection of the works of New York women authors made the same year (*Utica Morning Herald*, May 4, 1893). A special preface over her name inserted in the first volume of the Oregon his-

tory in the exhibit claimed the authorship of the volumes.

(These are the words of the preface: "It seems not only just, but necessary to affix my name to at least four volumes of the History of the Pacific States, although that does not cover all the work done on the history by myself. The four volumes referred to comprise the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Colorado, Wyoming, and Nevada. My name is therefore placed on the backs of these volumes without displacing that of Mr. Bancroft.")

As to the shares of the various writers in the history proper, we have the sources of information which have already been mentioned in speaking of the Native Races, supplemented by very full data left by Mrs. Victor concerning her part in the work. It is thus possible to give in a general way the authorship of each volume, barring fragmentary writing.

From these sources it is found that during the progress of the work on the Native Races, Mr. Bancroft had after hard labor and much revision completed his introduction to the History of Central America, and had written a half of the first volume. Oak wrote half of the preface and the fine print summary of explorations, and Nemos was responsible for a third of the volume from page 460 on, although he prepared material in the rough, leaving it to be rewritten by a German aid whose name is not given, but who may have been a man by the name of Kuhn mentioned as having done work on the second volume.

Of this latter volume, Mr. Bancroft wrote one chapter, apparently the first, which deals with Pizarro and Peru. Nemos and a writer named Peatfield (J. J. Peatfield, described by Bancroft [Lit. Ind., 265-267,] as a "strong man and one of talent," was born in Nottinghamshire, England, August 26, 1833. His father, a clergyman, educated him for the church and he took his degree at Cam-

bridge in 1857, being graduated in the classical tripos. The church, however, was distasteful to him, and he obtained a tutorship, subsequently in 1862 going to Nicaragua to engage in cacao cultivating. This enterprise proved a failure. After attempting cotton, cacao again, and finally coffee all in vain, in 1865 he became a bookkeeper at San José, the capital of Costa Rica. In January, 1868, he was made a clerk and translator to the legation at Guatemala, and two years later, British Consul General for Central America. While holding the consulship of Guatemala a third time, he resigned on account of ill health and went to San Francisco, where he arrived in November, 1871. Becoming bookkeeper and cashier for a Nevada mine at White Pine, and battling much with ill health, he returned to San Francisco, where he acted as teacher and bookkeeper until February, 1881, when he entered the library), labored together on the volume and prepared half of it, and Bates a fourth. Kuhn wrote a fifth which was partly rewritten by Nemos. The latter claimed about a fourth of a volume as the actual material written by him for the first and second volumes together.

The third volume, including the history of Central America in the nineteenth century, was written by Savage, who, nearly all his life had been engaged in the consular service of the United States in Cuba and Central America.

(Thomas Savage, according to a biography written by himself, was born at Havana, Cuba, August 27, 1823, a short time after his parents had removed thither from Philadelphia. His father, a descendant of the earliest settlers of Massachusetts and a brother of Savage, the famous genealogist of New England, was from Boston, and his mother, a native of Charleston, South Carolina, was the daughter of a French planter who had escaped the

great massacre in San Domingo and a Maryland woman of Jewish extraction).

In childhood, Savage was several times taken to the United States and back as the necessities of his father's business demanded. At the age of fifteen, he had studied the Latin classics, advanced mathematics and languages, nearly breaking forever his health, which had always been feeble. Abandoning his studies and taking a long rest in the country, he regained sufficient strength to enable him to support himself, for his parents had now lost their fortune. He entered a commercial house at Havana, and after working a few years as bookkeeper, in the summer of 1846 joined the United States consulate as clerk and translator. From that time until the end of the year 1867, he was attached to the consulate, rising successively to the positions of secretary to the consul general, deputy consul general, and vice consul general. From 1854 on, there was not a single year during which the consulate general was not in his charge for several months. During the War of the Rebellion he was several times in charge, once for twenty months, and during this trying period won the confidence of his government by laboring hard to do his whole duty.

He spent the greater part of the year 1868 in the United States, and then went to Panama, where he was engaged as assistant editor of the *Star and Herald*, having charge of the Spanish portion of the paper. Savage had lost a wife in Cuba, and in January, 1870, married a second time. Shortly afterward, he embarked for Salvador, where he taught English in the University, became consul-general, and finally started a newspaper. Just as this last enterprise was beginning to pay, his wife's precarious health necessitated his removal to a better climate, and he settled in Guatemala. Here he established a fine printing office, and began the publication of a newspaper. Though

aided by the government, the business nevertheless proved unprofitable, and after selling out at a heavy loss, he came to San Francisco in 1873. Throughout life, Savage was a constant reader, with a special fondness for history. He once said that he believed he had read the histories of all the world.)

From a perusal of what Nemos says concerning the History of Mexico, we are led to infer that Bancroft again wrote the introduction, as the former librarian credits his chief with two chapters of the first volume. Nemos wrote the remainder, but Bancroft rewrote some of his work, he said only a fifth, much of the revision consisting in a mere change of words. Oak differed with him on this point, holding that Bancroft did more rewriting, but Nemos persists that this is an exaggeration.

The second volume was done by Nemos, Savage, and Peatfield, Nemos writing the first half and some later chapters, two thirds of the volume in all, Savage one fourth, and Peatfield a little.

Of the third volume, Nemos wrote between a third and a half, including, as he tells us, the leading institutional and political parts, Savage a third, a writer named Griffin (George Butler Griffin was a native of New York state, and a graduate of Yale. He was a linguist, and had been an engineer in South America. Apparently early in the eighties, his connection with the library had ceased. He died by his own hand) two or three chapters, and Peatfield a part.

Of volume four, Bancroft did one chapter, Peatfield a fourth of the whole, and Savage a third. Nemos "assisted on parts," his work aggregating a fourth of the volume.

The fifth volume of the Mexican History, embracing the period from 1804 to 1861, was known as Savage's volume. Of the manuscript, he actually wrote about

1824

two thirds. Nemos did about a fourth, including the fall of Mexico and the leading war episodes. Some of the writing was done by Peatfield. (In conversation he claimed to have written a large part of the Mexican War chapters.)

The last volume of the Mexican History was prepared chiefly by Nemos and Savage, the latter writing the first and last chapters, the former about two thirds of the volume, including the history of Maximilian and the institutional chapters. Peatfield did a little work on this volume. Oak's contribution to the History of Mexico, according to his own statement, consisted of a "few slight parts."

The history of the northern part of Mexico, and the Southwest of the United States was Oak's special field, designated by him as The Spanish Northwest. The entire first volume of the History of the North Mexican States is his work. The history of Lower California in this volume, as well as that in the next, was based on a manuscript on Lower California written several years before by Harcourt. But this work was so altered by both Oak and Nemos in their respective volumes through condensation, the changing of conclusions, and the adding of new material, as to amount to a rewriting.

The History of Texas in North Mexican States, second volume, is the work of Peatfield; the remainder of the volume, between a third and a half, that of Nemos. (The Texas part was subsequently extended by Peatfield for the edition now in circulation, that it might find a better sale in that state.)

The volume on Arizona and New Mexico is the work of Oak alone.

Spanish and Mexican California likewise belonged to Oak's field and the first five volumes of the History of California are from his pen. (Nemos adds, "though he

neglected to put in institutions, leaving them for W. N. [himself] and Savage." In view of Oak's oft-repeated assertion that he was sole author of these five volumes, this must mean that they were supplied in other volumes. Moreover, there are no institutional parts properly speaking in these five volumes, and if such parts as "Mission Progress," "Commercial Affairs," and the like are to be regarded, they make up half the work.)

The early American history of California was a topic in which Mr. Bancroft was naturally interested because of his own mining experience during the early gold days. Nemos' schedule shows that he wrote sixty pages for the sixth volume of California, a circumstance which taken with our knowledge of fields of research into which he entered in the preparation of California Pastoral and Popular Tribunals makes us reasonably sure that he wrote the first, second, and twenty-fifth chapters. Mrs. Victor, who in her work on Oregon had been found especially strong as a writer on political subjects, was assigned the task of working up the political history of California, and, according to her own statement, wrote two hundred and thirty-four pages for this volume. We can positively identify chapters twelve, thirteen, twenty-three, and twenty-four as her work. From the similarity of their subject-matter to some already treated by her in the Oregon history, and from the fact that their addition to the work just indicated brings the total almost exactly to the figures given, we may conclude that she also wrote the third, fourth, and fifth chapters. The chapter entitled Mexican Land Titles is Oak's work, and the remainder of the volume, almost two thirds, is that of Nemos.

Information given by Mrs. Victor shows that she wrote for the final volume of the History of California four hundred and eighty-nine pages on politics and railroads.

We are thus enabled to designate as her work chapters nine to twenty-one inclusive, and chapter twenty-five. This still leaves to her credit eighteen pages to be located in some other chapter. The rest of the volume, embracing the portions dealing with commerce, manufactures, agriculture, and mining, was written, Nemos says, by himself. Before publication, the sheets on California judiciary were submitted to Justice Stephen J. Field for his approval. The estimate of certain pioneer characters in the California history, together with the adopting of the Mexican view of the conquest of that state by Americans, brought down upon Mr. Bancroft the condemnation of the California Society of Pioneers, who, in 1894, expelled him from honorary membership in their body. (See pamphlet proceedings of the Society of California Pioneers in reference to the History of Hubert Howe Bancroft.) It is a curious fact, however, that the passages which were made the basis of the society's indictment are almost entirely in the first five volumes of the California history, which were written by Oak. He has declared that even the revisions were his own and not Bancroft's.

The History of Utah, another storm-center among the histories, was written by Bates and Bancroft, the former, according to Nemos, preparing twice as much manuscript as the latter. The earlier chapters are by Bancroft, but no more certain assignment of their respective shares in the work can be made from the information at hand.

The History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming, as already noticed, was written by Mrs. Victor, with the exception of the first two chapters on Nevada, which were by Bancroft. Mrs. Victor's statement of her work includes these also, perhaps by inadvertence. It is possible that she rewrote them, however, as Mr. Bancroft had admitted that they were out of proportion.

5

In the work on the Northwest Coast, we again see Bancroft's predilection for early voyages. The first half of Volume I, including the Spanish explorations of the coast, belonged to Oak's field, and was written by him. Bancroft wrote most of the remainder of the two volumes, which included the maritime fur trade, the Lewis and Clark expedition, the Astor enterprise, the Northwest and Hudson Bay companies, and the later American fur trade.

A hundred pages on the "Oregon Question" written by Mrs. Victor for Oregon were incorporated in the second volume of the History of the Northwest Coast. She had taken the American side of the case, a view with which Mr. Bancroft was not in sympathy. By his order, Mr. Oak rewrote the subject from an English standpoint. He added chapter fifteen, but to some extent made use of her work in preparing chapter sixteen. Mrs. Victor always claimed that he merely altered it, Oak himself that he rewrote it. The remainder of her manuscript was retained and printed as chapter eighteen.

The volume on Washington, Idaho, and Montana, was written wholly by Mrs. Victor, a task for which she was fitted by her work on early Oregon history.

The History of Oregon was also her work, a fact which has been known and fully recognized by prominent Oregonians since the day of its publication. She had contemplated writing such a work even before the beginning of Mr. Bancroft's project, and it was only a realization of her inability to compete single handed with the capital and other resources at his disposal which caused her to enter his employ. In collecting material within the state, she had the assistance of such pioneer families as her friends the Applegates and McBrides, and among others, of Judge Deady and Elwood Evans. Valuable data concerning Hudson Bay rule in Oregon were fur-

nished her in a correspondence with Mr. A. B. Roberts and Mr. Allen, formerly of the Hudson Bay Company. (This correspondence is now in the possession of Mr. E. H. Kilham, of Portland, Or.) The work as written made more than two volumes, and condensation was necessary. A chapter on geology and mining was omitted by Mr. Bancroft; the disposal of the manuscript on the "Oregon Question" has already been noticed, and matter on the San Juan boundary dispute and the Modoc war was also incorporated in other volumes. Mrs. Victor considered the first volume of the History of Oregon as perfect as it could be made at the time. With certain features of the second she was not so well satisfied, the most prominent being the omission of the history of the Oregon Steam Navigation Company, necessitated by Mr. Bancroft's failure to secure material, and certain changes made by him in her manuscript on Indian Wars in Southern Oregon in such a way as to throw blame upon the settlers (Mrs. Victor in [Salem] *Oregon Statesman* February 24, 1895). It is worthy of note that her history is the first to pass over the political results attributed to Whitman's ride by previous writers. The sheets of the Oregon history before they were issued were submitted to Judge Deady for his approval.

In the half of the History of British Columbia which he wrote, Mr. Bancroft utilized some of the material that he had collected in person. Bates prepared a fourth of the manuscript, and Nemos and Bowman together the remainder, Nemos writing some of the chapters and revising others.

The History of Alaska afforded Mr. Bancroft an opportunity for further research in the field of early voyages. He is credited with half of the volume, Bates with a third, Nemos a little, and Petroff about a fourth. Nemos places

all of his own writing on this work and British Columbia together at a third of a volume.

A review of the facts shows that if we exclude the comparatively few interpolations and changes made by Mr. Bancroft, we can with assurance declare the authorship of all portions of the third volume of Central America, of the volumes on California, and of those on the North Mexican States, Arizona and New Mexico, Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming, the Northwest Coast, Oregon and Washington, Idaho and Montana, and that we can give in general terms, though without being able to locate the exact parts done by individuals, the names of the authors of two volumes of Central America, and all of Mexico, Utah, British Columbia, and Alaska. In these works Oak and Nemos were agreed that there were scattered fragmentary bits aggregating several volumes so worked over by different writers in different ways as to render it impossible to determine the exact authorship.

Turning to a consideration of the individual field of writing, we find that of the twenty-eight volumes of history proper, Bancroft is to be credited with four, no one entire, Oak with seven and a half, Nemos five, no one entire, Mrs. Victor a little less than five, Savage over three, Peatfield one and a half, principally in small parts, and Bates one and a fourth. (This is a computation based exactly upon the facts as given, except in Bancroft's case.) Nemos upon the same basis makes the shares, except Savage's and Bancroft's, all slightly greater. He assigns to Oak between seven and a half and seven and two thirds volumes, to himself and Mrs. Victor over five each, to Peatfield about two, and to Bates one and a half. An actual count of the parts of volumes written by Bancroft gives a total of three and a half, but Nemos said that he took four as the number upon the authority of Oak. This would allow him a half

volume of interpolations in the twenty-four and a half volumes done by others. Griffin, Petroff, Kuhn, and a man named Rasmus were the authors of fragments. Oak thought that the name was Erasmus, but said that Nemos who gave Rasmus was the better authority.

Concerning these facts in their main features, there is a complete agreement between Oak and Nemos, who together knew all the details which were to be known, and the evidence of the other writers fits exactly with their statements. The popular estimate of Hubert Howe Bancroft as the historian of the Pacific Coast, is founded upon the vague references and indefinite assertions of the Literary Industries within the pages of which there is nowhere to be found a straightforward statement that this man wrote more than a part of the works to which his name is attached. On the other hand, his own statements over his own signature admit that he did not pretend to be the author of what went out under his name. The ranking of Mr. Bancroft among historians of the United States is, therefore, an error, and what has appeared in the public press concerning an "Historian of the Pacific Coast," and a "Macaulay of the West," is legend pure and simple. Instead of one Pacific Coast historian who wrote the Bancroft volumes, there were eight.

As to the six supplementary volumes of the "Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft," which ended the series, Mrs. Victor had some means of determining the authorship. According to her notes, Savage and Nemos did a great deal of writing and revising. The Modoc War in *interpocula*, a part of the chapter entitled Some Indian Episodes, was written by Mrs. Victor from notes obtained by herself on the ground. She also wrote some other matter for this volume. The remainder was done by

Bancroft and his family, who also aided him much on Popular Tribunals.

Pastorals was produced chiefly by Bancroft. Of the Literary Industries, Nemos wrote several chapters or parts, Savage a little, and Oak three or four bits of a few paragraphs each. It must be remembered that Bancroft's writing in these private volumes was subjected to criticism, revision, and retouching by the best literary talent which the library afforded.

Concerning the Chronicles of the Builders, the biographical series which followed the histories, with such unfortunate results, some notes in Mrs. Victor's handwriting taken in 1888, about a year before work finally ended, give us the following facts: The introductory essay is by Nemos, as are also the reflective chapters and reviews, together with most of the historical text. Peatfield wrote Oregon, Washington, and Texas, though some of the latter was rewritten by Nemos. Mrs. Victor wrote "Routes and Transportation," and a number of the leading biographies, making nearly a volume. Savage wrote about a third of a volume.

Mr. Bancroft as a writer of history was subject to certain influences likely to be felt in his treatment of facts, which did not affect his coworkers. One great object was of course to make the work popular. It was with this end in view that much attention was given to literary finish and typographical features. It was his practice to have a writer employed for the purpose go over his own manuscripts and sometimes those of his assistants to add "classical allusions," as he termed them, for rhetorical effect. He himself was given to the reading of English classics—Carlyle's works are especially mentioned by his friends—as a means of acquiring a good literary style. To stimulate the reader's attention, he occasionally made a side remark of such a ludicrous char-

acter as to be startling when one comes upon it in a perfectly serious paragraph. Mrs. Victor often laughed over the interlineation in a paragraph written by her on the Oregon boundary question of the words :

“Man is a preposterous pig; probably the greediest animal that crawls upon this planet”: (Oregon, I, 592.)

In passing upon the work of his corps of writers, one who combined the duties of financier as well as editor of the work either consciously or unconsciously must have been influenced by the question whether the treatment of the subject before him was such as would please the people in the locality whose history was being written. The Mormon turn given the History of Utah by the toning down of certain incidents which other historians have “shrunk from contemplating” occurs to us as a case in point: (Frances Fuller Victor in *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 14, 1893; *New York Mail and Express*, November 23d).

The publication of the Chronicles before all of the volumes of history were out could hardly have lessened this tendency, as a favorable mention of a man in the history would naturally tend to make him more approachable upon the subject of contributing to that work. Upon the back of the letter to Mrs. Victor instructing her to give prominence to certain dictations, which he admits are practically worthless, is written in her hand the legend, “Ways that are dark and tricks that are vain.” As a result of complaint, changes were sometimes made in the text, even after the first edition was out: (Pamphlet, Proceedings of the Society of California Pioneers in Reference to the Histories of Hubert Howe Bancroft).

In the History of Montana occurs an example of a change made directly for business reasons. Several pioneers justly entitled to a place in the history of their territory disagreed with the agent of the Bancroft house concerning the number of volumes of the history which their

contract required them to take. As a punishment for their refusal to comply with the demands of the publisher, their biographies were stricken from their place in the footnotes after the volume was set up, and other matter was substituted. (The original sheets with marginal annotations as to amounts paid and biographies to be omitted are in the possession of Mr. E. H. Kilham of Portland, Oregon.) In view of these facts, we are forced to conclude that the business man in Mr. Bancroft, developed by the experiences and associations of a lifetime, sometimes got the better of the historical editor of scarcely fifteen years' standing.

A second factor to be considered in Mr. Bancroft's writing was sometimes expressed by his acquaintances as a mistaking of contrariness for originality. As already indicated, his tendency is toward a form of writing such as will attract the reader's attention. This tendency frequently asserts itself in sweeping statements and striking characterizations, many of them apparently impelled by a desire to give a turn to an incident or an estimate of a character different from that given by any previous writer. Thus Bancroft wrote an estimate of General Grant, which was startling because of the general hostility of its tone, and was considered so unjust by Mrs. Victor and Oak that they persuaded him to leave it out. (Letter of Mrs. Victor of July 25, 1892. The paragraph which was originally intended as a footnote in the History of Oregon, II, 246, is printed on page 18 of the Pamphlet of the Society of California Pioneers, which gives their proceedings with reference to Bancroft's histories.)

Again, in making an effort to avoid following Washington Irving, he has given in the part of the Northwest Coast which he wrote a treatment of the Astor enterprise, and an estimate of the character of Captain Bonne-

ville, which later historians have shown to be prejudiced and in error. (See Chittenden's History of the American Fur Trade in the Far West, I, 432-33.)

A third influence affecting the treatment of facts of history which passed under Mr. Bancroft's editorship, as well as those which he presented in the scattered portions of volumes of which he could claim real authorship, is that of personal bias. The manager of the Bancroft enterprise was a man, who in the course of a thirty years' business career had many business rivalries and personal enmities. His strong dislikes frequently assert themselves in his writings, if we are to take his own statements. (Lit. Ind., 374.)

Again, the personal equation must be accounted for in the value which he sets on the work of historians who wrote before him. He not infrequently disparages their writings in the strongest terms, his depreciation of Washington Irving being one of the most palpable cases. (Chittenden's History of American Fur Trade in the Far West, I, 244-46), has forcibly revealed the extent of the injustice done by Bancroft in this one case. That there are others like it will readily appear. For the effort to demonstrate the superiority of the Bancroft histories over others, we must accordingly make due allowance when attempting a critical estimate.

Furthermore, the editor-manager began the work with certain theories and notions of history that have found their way into the pages which he has published. From the beginning, he adopted the British side in dealing with the dispute over the Oregon boundary. In his treatment of Indian wars, the same tendency to adopt ready-made theories asserted itself. In the manuscript of Mrs. Victor's History of Oregon, treating of Indian Wars in Southern Oregon which "gave great credit to the veterans of that struggle and the settlers generally for

their forbearance," the editor interlined some expressions, throwing the blame upon the settlers. When it was pointed out to him that this was not true, he replied that he had begun his *History of Central America* with this theory of Indian wars, and must be consistent throughout the entire series (Communication of Frances Fuller Victor to the [Salem] *Oregon Statesman*, February 24, 1895).

To such errors as those just enumerated the work of Mr. Bancroft's collaborators was not subject. The dislike inspired by some of the measures of their chief has sometimes resulted in their disparagement as historians by a public press, absolutely ignorant of the parts of the work for which they were responsible. (In the *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 16, 1893, is a very striking example. Occasional utterances of the San Francisco papers of about the same time follow along the same line.) It must be remembered that they were not only able and educated, but that the competitive wage system under which they worked offered every inducement to search for the truth and to make it known as they found it in the best collection of books, pamphlets, and newspapers on Pacific Coast history that was ever made. The only characteristics which were common to the library corps, as shown by a study of their biographies, were good education, ill health, and liberal religious views.

In general, these writers had special qualifications which adapted them for work in their respective fields. To Oak there was a fascination in the study of documents from which the usually uninteresting and sometimes tedious details of events in Spanish and Mexican provincial localities were derived. His contributions to history he could honestly claim were better than other writings on the same subject because of the exhaustiveness of his research through the great amount of material at his dis-

posal. While he admired the finer qualities of style in the writings of others, they were not required in his work. He frankly declared that he had little natural ability in this line, and in the writing of provincial annals found no opportunity for the cultivation of what he had. Oak once asserted in a joking mood that he had found of great service a thorough knowledge of Spanish and French, together with a useful smattering of other languages, including English. None of his chapters were rewritten or even reread with a view to polish, for the reason that he believed his works had their chief value merely as records, and that an attempt to make them fascinating to general readers could but result in impairing their value for reference. The fact that the superintendent of literary activities in the Bancroft library was an enthusiast in original research who cared vastly more what was said than how it was said is a circumstance favoring the accuracy of the histories which must not be overlooked. Oak could say that from the first he had exercised an important influence in the direction of honest research and against superficial work, and that he opposed undue haste in bringing the work to a conclusion.

Nemos, unlike Oak, was a writer of smooth, flowing English. On account of his foreign birth he had no preference in the selection of a field, and wrote for more different volumes than any other member of the library force. His great ability, and his consequent position of all-round man, are to be accounted for by great natural endowment supplemented by a thorough training in youth in his own country, a schooling during his London residence in the philosophy of his own country as well as that of the German universities, and a wide acquaintance with European languages. With a remarkable faculty for systematizing work, he was useful, honorable, and trustworthy.

Bancroft Library

To Mrs. Victor was assigned the agreeable task of working up the field in which she had long taken special interest. She was the only member of the staff who had a literary reputation before entering the library. Noted as a poetess of unusual promise in her earlier days, she had also written excellent prose for different journals, among them a magazine history of the United States published in serial form by the Harpers, until the beginning of the Civil War compelled the discontinuance of the publication in which it appeared. As a contributor to the San Francisco papers in the early "sixties," she had met with pronounced success, while her work on her projected History of Oregon and her publication of two works on the Northwest fitted her for her special field. She had the enviable faculty of putting life into her writings, and it was partially on account of her graceful style that Mr. Bancroft sought her services, for his eye was always attracted by good literary work. But the volumes written by Mrs. Victor were of a far different stamp from the popular literary history. The late Mary Sheldon Barnes, professor of history in Stanford University, declared that she had done her work well. All who were acquainted with her personally recognized the fact that she placed the truth as she conceived it before all else. The leading opponents of the stand she took on disputed questions freely recognized the fact that she had striven to do conscientious, painstaking work. Given to speaking what she believed was the whole truth, even when it was contrary to her immediate interest to do so, she was the last of all persons whom a regard for literary effect would swerve from the path of historical accuracy.

A better man for chief Spanish authority than Thomas Savage could scarcely have been found. Thoroughly acquainted with the language by a life-long residence in Spanish America, he had a natural fondness for history.

to which his long continuance in the consular service had added a habit of accuracy, and a capacity for hard work. The fifth volume of the History of Mexico, embracing the history of that country from 1824 to 1861, and the third volume of the Central American history which threads out the tangled skein of the history of the five little republics in the nineteenth century, serve as examples of the vast amount of detail which his writing covered, to say nothing of his labors in collecting and extracting an overwhelming mass of material on Spanish American history. All agree that he was a polished and sound man.

In the writers of smaller parts of the history, we find that the qualifications and fitness for the individual field of writing were no less than in those who prepared more manuscript. Peatfield's connection with the British consular service bespeaks his reliability and capability; Bates' occupancy of a responsible position under a prominent English educator, and the high regard in which his work was held by Hittell bear witness that he was competent to write history; and Petroff's standing as a scholar in his own country, together with his thorough acquaintance with Alaska, vouch for the character of his work.

While the Bancroft corps of writers were not infallible, they were a class of persons in whose integrity and accuracy we may have as great confidence as in the average historian. We can only regret that we can not point out all parts of the work done by each, and that we can not show in detail the extent of Mr. Bancroft's editorial alterations of their work. This latter feature, inherent in the Bancroft plan of writing history, is its greatest weakness, since it of necessity involves some uncertainty as to whether the words we are reading are those of the author who wrote the volume, or the interpretation of Mr. Bancroft. A comparative study of the style of what

we know to be the work of the respective writers may suffice to settle a given case. We may state as a fact that the majority of alterations in the manuscripts of the chief assistants were due to the necessity of condensation; and that, aside from this, the revision of their work usually consisted merely in the suppression of radical utterances and the interlineation of a few lines occasionally for literary effect. The somewhat rough estimate given of the number of volumes written by the respective writers indicates that Mr. Bancroft's revisions constitute about one page in fifty of the work in fields assigned to his assistants, although the average may be lower. In view of these facts, the knowledge that those who wrote the Bancroft histories were capable, honest persons, must tend decidedly toward the increasing of our general confidence in the series.

