

HISTORY OF THE NEW WORLD CALLED AMERICA.

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Fellow of University College. Vol. I. (Oxford Clarendon Press).

ALTHOUGH the subject of this work is quite beyond the proper scope of our Society, it seems fitting that a brief notice should be given of an undertaking of so much importance, as the author is a Buckinghamshire man, has made valuable contributions to the earlier numbers of the RECORDS, and is, at the present time, a member of the Society. Mr. Payne claims the admiration, as well as attention, of an Archæological Society, as he has taken up his laborious task, not only in the spirit of an historian, but in that of an archæologist. In his investigations, he grapples with so large a subject as the nature and origin of American civilization, and whether the advancement of aboriginal communities "was imported either wholly or partially from the Old World, or was entirely of indigenous growth."

He forcibly expounds an original proposition, that "advancement is universally based on the conversion of natural food-resources, already known to savage tribes, into an artificial basis of subsistence," deducing from this the indigenous origin of American advancement; "for," he says in his preface, "the llama and the paco, the potato, the manioc, and the maize, indigenous to the New World, were absolutely unknown in the Old, while the corresponding bases of agriculture and herdsmanship in the Old World were equally wanting in the New."

Mr. Payne's narration of the different discoveries of America by Western nations from the earliest times, and of how the way was opened for these discoveries, is most interesting. This part of his work gives evidence of the thoroughness of his plan, and of the depth of his researches.

The author's wide reading, and more especially his acquaintance with the Spanish authorities, evidenced by his copious references, will make this work, when completed, a standard text-book both in America and England. The character of Columbus, and the objects which fired his enthusiasm as a discoverer, might well induce us to give copious quotations from "The History of the New World," but we must reluctantly refrain. We cannot, perhaps, more appropriately close this very brief notice than by quoting the following passage from an able review of the work:—"Indeed, the originality of Mr. Payne is one of his titles to esteem. He has conceived and begun a history of the world which is called New, such as no other writer has undertaken of the world which glories in being Old."—ED.
