WILLIAM LANGLAND.

A POET OF THE PEOPLE IN ANCIENT ENGLAND.

PIERS PLOWMAN. A Contribution to the History of English Mysticism. By J. J. Jusserand. Translated from the French by M. E. R. Revised and Enlarged by the Author. Illustrated. Pp. 262. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

It is not so much the poem on Piers Plowman as the author, William Langland, that M. Jusserand aims to restore to popular knowledge. He sees in Langland a typical Englishman of his time, and one who may be compared with those of other times to show how little change there has been in the type. In this light even Chaucer does not seem to M. Jusserand so exclusively of native genius as his shadowy contemporary. Shadowy indeed is the form of Langland. It is a laborious task of the historical imagination to shape a semblance of him out of the environment in which he must have lived, out of the conscious or unconscious allusions of his poem, out of the events of the time. There are many questions about Chaucer's life and works never likely to be settled. But with Langland everything may be put in doubt, even the author's name and his very existence. A skilful critic could easily make out a plausible case for the anonymity of the Vision concerning Piers the Plowman. But one perverse enough to attempt this feat would still have to acknowledge what M. Jusserand calls the insularity of his unknown poet. Chaucer was cosmopolitan. He had the friendship of Petrarch and Des Champs. Gower, too, though he travelled little or not at all, yet saturated himself with the French spirit. His social position made this possible for him. Thus there is an alien note at times even in Gower's conservatism which is never heard amid the Saxon alliterations attributed to Langland. To the latter other countries are as nothing. He thinks only of England. The claims of the kings to the possession of France are to him, as to all the common people for whom he speaks, absurd. It is peace the people want, not a hundred years of war. They want a nation of their own, within their own natural boundaries. They see the greatness of their task, which is nothing less than the creation of the England of later times, and they know that it is enough for the strongest race. So Langland wants the nation to spend its energies at home, and not to be disturbed from the work of improving the machinery of the State and the establishment of a more perfect balance of power between King and Parliament. All the ideas of constitutional reform that were in the minds of the people find expression somewhere in the story of which the plowman is the hero. "There is almost no remonstrance in the rolls of Parliament," remarks M. Jusserand, "that is not to be found also in the Visions. The same reforms are advocated, the same abuses denounced." The curious fact is that the commons are hardly less visionary in plain prose—French, English, or broken Latin—than their poet is in his verse. "Thus has worked for centuries, to the great profit of the nation, the dual genius inherited from remote ancestors. The Saxon dreams his dream and sings his song; the Norman listens and says, 'Why not? Be it so!'" The men of this mixed race have "the boundless audacities of mystic dreamers, whom nothing stops because they build in the air."

Here again the poet of Piers Plowman is above all English in a restricted sense. If there is in him a blending of the Celtic, the Latin and the Germanic races the last had most claim upon him. He shares their vague longings, their seasons of profound depression and of strange exaltation. With such a temper as his he might have turned to dreams and visions in any case, but the age in which he lived was highly favorable to such literature. All the poets of the mediaeval period were more or less subject to this device, which was not a mere trick of the imagination. Most of them dreamed out of doors in the spring when the grass was new and the leaves were fresh and the flowers had just opened. Even Dante dreamed in spring and Langland's first vision came to him on a May morning. It is not of the other world that he speaks, but of the life which he saw about him in his waking moments. The small group of persons whom Chaucer collected at the Tabard Inn are types of the multitude which Langland saw in his vision. As he dealt with a mob, so his poem was irregular in its purport, but expressing all the while the thoughts of the class which passes now in England under the generic name of Hodge. But while Piers Plowman is the honest and guileless laborer, he stands also for a religious ideal. The men of the fourteenth century well understood that they had in him the outward and inward representative of themselves. The name became a sign and symbol, a sort of password, a personification of the laboring classes. Perhaps they misunderstood the meaning of the poet. He might not have counselled such an uprising of the peasantry as that which occurred in his lifetime, for to his mind the commons could no more do without the king than royalty could do without subjects. On this point Gower and Langland were agreed, though one wrote in Latin for those who were educated, and the other in a mixture of English dialects which must have seemed quaint to polished ears even in that age, when the language of England had not yet taken literary form. Gower denounced the corruptions of the times, both in Church and State, but he had the prejudice of the gentry against making phrases in the vulgar tongue for the mob to use as war cries. Langland had no such prejudice. It may be inferred then that he was not of the gentry.

The origin and social position of Langland are the most interesting themes dealt with by M. Jusserand. For in his view the poet's case is one of mental disease, due to his circumstances, a mental disease which the critic can use and does use for interpreting the peculiarities of certain renowned Englishmen of later times. The trouble is not one that affects the poet's judgment. He is as good and as wise a conservative as even a moral gentleman like Gower. In Church and State he attacks abuses, not institutions. He is no reformer who desires to overturn the hierarchy of the Church, but he wishes that the Pope may not lay hand on overmuch power in England. Either he has not thought as deeply as Wicliffe, for example, on these matters, or his turn of thought is wholly different. The fact is plain that he had no pride of learning like the great English Reformer, nor any pride of class like that apparent in Gower. He is far simpler minded than these men, because, says M. Jusserand, he is of ruder origin. He was not even the son of a freeman, though there be a tradition which seems to say so. When Holy Church in the form of a woman—one should remember here the visions of Hermas—comes to explain to him the things seen in his dream, she means only the literal truth when she claims to have made him free. She was the first to receive him, and under the law as it then existed entrance into the Church, that is, removal from the ranks of the laity, was a bar to servitude. It was a privilege which serfs might well be tempted to abuse. There were those who found ecclesiastical duties as oppressive as the enforced labor of their fathers. If Langland condemned these loiterers and lazybones, it was in the words of a man who understood their feelings. Confronted by one of his own characters, the poet confessed that he had no land to live by, and he evaded the question whether he was of free birth by pointing to his tonsure. And he himself was lazy. He did not wholly deny it. He only said that he was too weak to work and too tall to bend his back. If he condemned abuses from which he himself profited, that is just the point to be considered in the effort to understand his mental state. He knew that he was one of those at whom the Commons struck when it begged "that it be ordained and commanded that no bondman or villein should put his children henceforth to school, in order to advance them by clerkship (clergie), and this for the maintenance and salvation of the honor of all freemen of the realm." But he knew also that he suffered the obloquy which his position as one neither bond nor free brought upon him. And he had the knowledge, which stimulated his pride, if it did not bring contentment, that he did not put himself into the place he held. It was when he was young that his father and his friends sent him to school. They were to blame, not he, first that in his person a common abuse of the times was exemplified, and second, that he knew no other way to live than in his long robes. If they had lived, he might have advanced so far as a cleric that he would have been above the miseries of his birth and his poverty. But they died. M. Jusserand's imagination leads him to think that here Langland refers to one of those mediaeval epidemics that made life so precarious. Men lived in those times in the midst of terrors. It was no wonder that they became visionaries and mystics. The poet would have been predisposed to melancholy in any case, but his peculiarities might all be accounted for by some sudden calamity, which deprived him at one blow of all those who took any interest in his advancement. Langland had high hopes in his youth. He said as much. But they all depended on his patrons, and they disappeared. M. Jusserand, with his intimate knowledge of times and seasons in the Middle Ages, thinks that the misfortune to which Langland referred may have been a pestilence that raged in the West of England in 1349, when the poet was perhaps eighteen years of age.

Without hope of preferment he must now live by that labor which he "learned best." He learned all the wretchedness that isolation and poverty and unfulfilled desire could teach him. To make his misery worse he married a wife. Marriage removed his last chance of rising in the world. His task as a chanter became even more onerous. It was a mere saying of words for a livelihood. Thus he came to live two lives—one as an ecclesiastical slave toiling for a little silver, the other as a dreamer of dreams. "He has depicted himself at this period of his existence," says M. Jusserand, "a great, gaunt figure, dressed in solemn garments with large folds, sad in a grief without end, bewailing the protectors of his childhood, seeing nothing but clouds on the horizon of his life." He made friends with none. He seemed to others a madman. He knew their thoughts. Nor is the fancy of mental disease ever far from his own mind. "Fool, frantic, idiot," these are words frequent on his pen. When he looks from the miseries of the world around him to the possibilities of another world, his confession is: "The deeper I divine, the darker me it thinketh." If he had no learning, if he had remained a peasant, then he would have been happy in the simplest faith. Thus he wavers between hope and despair, between fear and confidence, between excesses and austerities, between wilfulness and "willessness." In these waverings are to be found "some of the symptoms of those diseases of the will which have been so minutely studied in our time. We can notice in his case the existence of several among the phenomena which characterize these diseases, such as fixed ideas, and with them, alteration or depression of the will." He was unable to react against the conditions of his life. He scorns in his verse the very sins which he practises. He is true to himself only in his visions. There he preaches the conservatism, the optimism of common-sense. Surely he was not the only mystic in whom madness had method. As Saxon and as mystic, M. Jusserand holds him to be the true predecessor of men whom perhaps only a French historian would venture to associate in a single group—men so diverse as Rolle of Hampole, who by inspiration of the Holy Ghost could write on one subject and talk on another; Lord Herbert of Cherbury, George Fox, John Bunyan, John Wesley, William Cowper, and Blake, the painter, or the symbol-loving poets Shelley, Rossetti and Browning. Some of these men, he says, border on madness. But the link that really joins them to Langland is that they are Saxon. They do not imitate each other. They might resent being named together, but they are united by "inherited blood, qualities and moods." In each of them may be seen some of the traits of the old Anglo-Saxons, who "excel in depicting sombre and desolate scenes; they are haunted by the thought of death, the charnel-house and the tortures of hell."

TIMES OF LOUIS XIV.

EUROPE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

EUROPE, 1598–1715. By Henry Offley Wakeman, M. A. Period V. Pp. viii., 392. Macmillan & Co. (Periods of European History.)

Mr. Wakeman's study of Europe in the seventeenth century, that is from the peace of Vervins to the death of Louis XIV, is really a history of France, to which the good and bad fortunes of the other states of the Continent are mere episodes. The long duel between France and England, which ended at Waterloo, began in the seventeenth century. But it is hardly more than incidental to the affairs of that period. The beginnings of Prussian power and of Russian power began to be seen, but not even the most acute statecraft hinted as yet at such triumphs as Sadowa and Sedan, and it can hardly be said that the Muscovite riddle has been solved even at this late day. The seventeenth century saw the ancient struggle between Asia and Europe, with its migrating Oriental floods of population reduced to the style of a diplomatic dispute henceforth to be labelled "The Eastern Question." It witnessed the rise and fall of Gothic power for the last time in Europe. Orderly as it was in a military sense, the fierce movement of the Swedes to the southward, under Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII., was not altogether unlike those which had beaten down the Roman Empire. It was indeed against the pretended successor of that empire that Gustavus Adolphus directed his arms. The seventeenth century saw the beginnings of the modern army systems of Europe; it saw the nations settling down to the methods of government which most of them have retained to the present day; it saw the end of war on account of religious controversies. The boundaries were drawn, and they have hardly been changed since, between Protestantism and Catholicism. One may almost say that above a certain parallel of latitude it is as difficult to form a state with an elaborate religious hierarchy largely external to it, as it is to find a non-Catholic state in the South of Europe. With the single exception of France the great nations of the Continent are still as they were in the seventeenth century, monarchies absolute in theory. Mr. Wakeman points to these facts and remarks that the formation of the modern European national unities is "the main element of continuous interest and importance in the history of the seventeenth century; that is to say, the acquisition by the chief European States of the boundaries, which they have since substantially retained, the adoption by them of the form of government to which they have since adhered, and the assumption by them, relatively to the other states, of a position and influence in the affairs of Europe which they have since enjoyed."

The Reformation left France better united politically that it had ever been before. Inconceivable abuses and corruption could not destroy French National feeling, and Henry IV had only to accept formally the religion of the masses to have their enthusiastic support in his difficult but victorious conflict with the nobility. The reaction of the sixteenth century against Protestantism strengthened France, while it merely intensified the anarchy which had existed from the Middle Ages in Germany beneath the imperial and electoral system. All the horrors of the Thirty Years' War were required to settle religious boundaries. But that war terminated many of the claims of the Empire, and transferred the question of supremacy in Germany to the North. The kind of federalism exhibited in the Holy Roman Empire was a failure. Meanwhile the principle of federalism was tried at the mouth of the Rhine with very different results. The toleration, which was the best part of Protestantism, when rightly interpreted, proved as good a basis of agreement for the United Provinces as Catholicism did for France, and the federal bond, then wholly experimental, proved strong enough to sustain the attack of Spain and subsequently that of Louis XIV. Mr. Wakeman maintains that the Dutch power remained intact mainly on account of the weakness of its neighbors. Neither France nor England were strong enough to attend to all their other affairs and to the Dutch as well. But it is also possible to suppose that, if the Dutch had paid throughout the seventeenth century less attention to colonial enterprise and more to European politics, they might have been more potent among the nations than they were. The simple fact was that the United Provinces had things their own way at times when this seemed impossible, and they brought to bear in the end the necessary force to bend the French monarchy. Meanwhile everything contributed to carry France toward supremacy. Before the close of 1661 she had obtained by the peace of Westphalia and that of the Pyrenees a scientific frontier. The people were misgoverened, overtaxed and oppressed in various ways, but their patriotism could not be subdued. Now, after the achievements of Sully and Richelieu and Mazarin, they had a young King, and this King started with one of the ablest finance ministers known to modern times. "A young King," says Mr. Wakeman, "who took up the reins of the government after the middle of the century, found an open map before him." He had to deal with a country weary of war and willing to endure anything for the sake of peace, with a nobility thinned and impoverished and unable to resist royal encroachments. The only thing left in good condition was the army, and that was in perfect fitness for an ambitious ruler's use. Thus Louis XIV came to the throne just when Europe was adapted to his genius. He made the utmost of all his opportunities, but the trouble was that he exhausted them. If the French monarchy under his care reached the summit of its power and grandeur, it also began to descend with him toward inevitable destruction. The reason for this Mr. Wakeman finds in the fact that Louis was "essentially a barren man, singularly skilful in making use of the material with which he was provided, but unable to add to it," and in the fact that as an absolute monarch he could tolerate no one greater than the King. "Even in the Prussian monarchy of to-day," remarks Mr. Wakeman, "there is no room for a Bismarck; still less could one have been permitted to exist at the court of Louis XIV." The ideal of perfect kingship was one thoroughly attainable, but it could no more be preserved than the fantastic notions of knight errantry. It was simply necessary to have a genius for organization and to pay unwearied attention to details. Dress and etiquette rivalled in Louis's attention the profoundest diplomacy. If anything was worth doing it was worth doing with the utmost completeness. What the King did himself, he chose that his officers should do. "The great ministers are organizers, not statesmen. They are at the very antipodes of the genius to Richelieu. And they are organized, not in the sense in which Sully was an organizer, merely the rooter-out of patent abuses, but in the far higher sense in which Charles Montagne was an organizer, one who laid down true principles of administration and constructed the machinery necessary for carrying them out. Lionne organized the French Foreign Office and diplomatic service; Colbert, the internal administration of France; Louvois, the War Office, on principles which became the acknowledged principles of foreign, home and military administration among all countries for more than a century." As against the notions of many English students of French history, Mr. Wakeman sees in the application of the principles of Protection by Colbert by no means an unmixed evil. The picture which he draws of France in 1671 is one to be envied. To Colbert, perhaps, more than to any other single man, was due the change by which war ceased utterly to be the resort of religious factions and became the instrument of commercial rivalry. The Dutch war of 1672 looks like a direct outgrowth of the custom-house. It was a foretaste of the conflicts of the eighteenth century, when, it must be said, money talked if it ever spoke in this world. To Colbert's initiative was due the fact that France emerged defeated at the death of Louis XIV—defeated, but stronger than she had ever been before.

Of course Mr. Wakeman points out that there might have been another story to tell. Not all of Louis's good fortune was of his own devising. There came a time when Marlborough, if he had been adequately supported in the councils of England and the United Provinces, might well have executed his plan of seizing Paris. Every frontier fortress of importance was in his possession. But he could not fight the French on his front and the Tories in his rear. It took long-continued war and the genius of Marlborough to bring this about, but it was a significant forewarning of what was to be done somewhat more than a century later. The English soldier had begun his career on the Continent, not in great numbers, but with brilliant success. He had figured at Blenheim and Ramillies, and he kept himself pretty well in view from those days onward until Napoleon was safely housed on St. Helena. Thus we see that though Mr. Wakeman has made the history of the seventeenth century mainly a history of France, he has opened the drama in which England is to be the foremost actor in the eighteenth century. He has also, by dwelling on the steps in the growth of Brandenburg and Prussia, from the meagre times before the Thirty Years war down to the recognition of the Prussian Kingdom, foreshadowed the great tragedy of the present age. His style is animated and it is enlivened rather than injured by figures of speech from the borderland of slang; as, for example, when he says that Turenne in 1674 by skilful strategy handled the imperialist army "neck and crop" out of Alsace.

IBSEN'S "BRAND."

A TRANSLATION IN THE ORIGINAL METRES.

BRAND: A Dramatic Poem in Five Acts. By Henrik Ibsen. Translated in the Original Metres, with an Introduction and Notes, by C. H. Herford, Litt. D., M. A. Pp. xcix, 288. Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Enough has been said perhaps on the somewhat fragrant morality of Ibsen's works. It is possible that enough has been said about them in every aspect. But Professor Herford, by his clever translation of "Brand," challenges attention anew to a well-worn theme. He gives his readers good verse. But he is not satisfied without also trying to show that this smooth and rather cloying poetry conceals a profound philosophy. He subjects "Brand" and Ibsen to an elaborate analysis, in which figure largely allegory and symbolism that we are bound to think would never have been found if the drama had stood alone. That Ibsen had an obvious allegory in mind can easily be allowed. He was almost certain to hit upon one even without intending to do so the moment he began to use the few individual characters which he chose as types of classes. A mere abecedarian in fiction can handle that sort of symbolism. The story is merely that of a country pastor surrounded by other figures—the local State official, the nearest dignitary of the Church, the schoolmaster, the church sexton, groups of villagers, a wife who loves him, a crazy gypsy girl who haunts him, so to speak—and it tells naturally of his efforts to better the condition spiritually and temporally of his parishioners. Now whatever such a pastor's aspirations were, if he had any independence of character, any views of his own, especially if he had any turn for heresy, he would be almost sure to cross the wishes of all within his narrow circle. Suppose that the man fastened upon any fixed idea, for example, that a given usage of the Church was wrong. He would cease to conform to custom in the matter, he would exhort others not to conform, two parties would at once arise in the little community, and in the fierce battle over a principle the pastor would seem to one class a leader and a savior, to the others a disturber and a dangerous man.

The community is but the nation in little. It is easy to use phrases in describing such a conflict so as to give it a much grander air than it deserves. It would not matter in the slightest degree what the particular "fad" of the pastor might be, the story would be always the same in its main features. He would be told by the worldly leader of his parish that people of common-sense must desert him. His bishop would intimate that as a brilliant preacher he might hope for preferment if he threw away his hobby, and the people would quarrel over him until they found something more interesting to talk about. All this would happen whether the case were one of altar candles, or infant baptism, or a cross in a pulpit chair. In itself the story must be a narrow one, but by the very simplest of literary tricks it could be made to seem national allegory. The trick would be particularly easy where an author could have a State Church as part of his machinery. That is all there is in "Brand." The pastor's "fad" is "All or Nothing." He insists on his definition of the Deity and duty and Church and world being accepted by everybody. The funny thing about the matter is that everybody does accept it, not without misgivings, but with whispered rather than open dissent. At this point Ibsen is original, if anywhere. Even the State official and the archdeacon follow rather than antagonize the hero. No such one-sided controversy was ever seen before even in fiction. But when the pastor has enlarged the Church—that is, made it as broad as his own imaginings—he finds that his parishioners have not enlarged their aspirations to fit it, and so he locks the door and flings the key into the sea. Really it would be wearisome to say how often the world has been taught this needless lesson. And now to be told that profound insight was required in a poem like "Brand" is not pleasant. The complete immolation of self has been the theme of ascetic Christianity for ages. It is understood one way by one man and another way by another man. But there was no possibility in it as a literary theme that had not been dealt with after a fashion long ago. The profound insight required to interpret Ibsen turns out on inspection to be profound ignorance of the history of literature. The question is not opened here whether or not "Brand" is a work of genius. But does the poem contain a novel message to the world? Those who say that it does are respectfully asked to enlarge the circle of their reading.

The metrical form of the drama as imitated by Professor Herford resembles in a measure that of "Hudibras." The octosyllabic iambic is about the last form of verse that would be thought of for a dramatic poem in English, but those who remember the brevity of certain favorite Norse and old Saxon metres can easily imagine the effect of these rapid lines in the original. The long speeches also make one think of the dialogues between Hudibras and his squire Ralph. One misses the endless double and triple rhymes of Butler, but he catches enough of the spirit natural to the verse to sympathize with those who have called "Brand" a satire. Professor Herford regrets the lack of double rhymes in English as compared with Norwegian. He had too exalted an idea of his model; otherwise he could have found double rhymes in plenty well suited to the sarcastic purpose of Ibsen, though perhaps not equal to his mysterious allegory.

AN ANCIENT LETTER.

EVIDENCE OF FORMER WIDESPREAD CULTURE IN SYRIA.

A MOUND OF MANY CITIES; OR, TELL EL HESY EXCAVATED. By Frederick Jones Bliss, M. A. Pp. xii, 201. Macmillan & Co.

Among the benefits arising from the numerous researches in the Orient not the least valuable is acquaintance with the Eastern peoples of the present day. Mere travel served usually to perpetuate errors. All Arabs were liars to the casual visitor, who had no time to discover whether he was stating a fact or turning an unfortunate exception into a general law. Bedouins were all robbers and murderers, and Fellahs fit only for slaves. But the men who spend months or years in excavating ruin-heaps find that human nature is varied among Egyptian tombs or on the Syrian Desert as it is in civilized countries. Mr. Bliss's book exemplifies this fact. He had the advantage of Dr. Flinders Petrie's experience in the neighborhood of the mound which he was to open. Dr. Petrie had kept a list of his workmen, with notes of their peculiarities, and it surprised the natives greatly when Mr. Bliss, with these notes in hand, ranged them in an order of merit much as they might have done with each other. Apparently they had some superstitious notions on that subject, thinking that the Europeans had occult means of detecting their traits. They may have connected this, in a manner common to savages, with the use of their names. In one case Mr. Bliss found that a young Arab, part owner of the hill in which the digging was done, called himself Hussein, though he had given for record the name Nasur. "I was afraid," said he, looking foolish, "to let him (Dr. Petrie) write down my real name." They had other superstitions connected with the excavations. Layard long ago observed that the natives near Koyunjik thought he was digging for treasure, and even gathered up fragments of goldleaf and gilding for him. They were astonished that he rejected these things. But Layard finally showed them something as wonderful as the figures which they imagined in the palaces of the Jinn. Mr. Bliss found the same magical fancies among the Syrian peasants whom he employed.

"Don't bewitch the tell," said an Arab to him one evening.

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Bliss.

"Oh, we know what you do. You come to a tell that is full of gold and treasure, and bewitch these into the form of potsherds. Then you dig out the potsherds, take them to your country, undo the spell, and they turn back to gold and treasure."

Nothing that he could say changed their minds. They were willing to believe all that he said to them with the addition of the bewitched pieces of pottery. That he should actually prize a burned brick with cuneatic marks remained a mystery to them. His only regret was that he found only one specimen of what may have been in its day a considerable collection of antique records and letters. But this small brick, if rightly interpreted, is of singular interest and value. Not so very long ago it was a question whether communication by writing was possible, say, two thousand years before Christ, or even one thousand years before our era. Then the evidence began to accumulate which showed that official and court life at the great centres of early civilization was united by the hands of the scribe. The reports of subordinate officials to a central authority on the Nile or the Euphrates became familiar to modern eyes. But these officials might be mere exiles from court among people as ignorant of letters as the modern savages. The cuneiform letter found by Mr. Bliss seems to dispel that idea. His excavations were on the site of what is supposed to be the ancient fortified town of Lachish, founded by the Amorites before the settlement of the Israelites in Palestine. The early town long retained its independence, though surrounded by a foreign foe. Indeed, it appears to have had conflicts with Egypt before the times of the Israelites, and to have paid the necessary tribute for security. The ancient fortress was overrun at last by the Hebrews. From first to last, eleven towns, according to Mr. Bliss's excavations, were built on the hill. The latest ruins belong to the fifth century before Christ—that is, to a period shortly before the wars of Alexander the Great in the East. In most cases these successive towns show the effects of war. It is to this fact that Mr. Bliss attributes the meagre number of relics which he found. From the times of Thothmes onward, the country was subject to periodical devastations. The wonder is not that so few things were left, but that any were found. No such discovery was to be anticipated as had been made previously at Tell el Amarna. The curious thing is that the principal find at Tell el Hesy should have been just such as was missing from Tell el Amarna. While former discoveries showed that writing was practised in high circles, it remained to be shown that every little fortified town might also have its scribes, and might keep up a brisk correspondence with its neighbors. So far as one fragmentary letter can do this, it is done by the tablet which Mr. Bliss discovered. The date of the letter can also be fixed approximately. According to Major Conder, it was addressed to Zimridi, and according to Professor Sayce, Zimridi was Governor of Lachish in the time of Khunaten, the King famous in Egyptian annals for his attempt to change the national religion, and for his long contest with the priesthood, fourteen or fifteen centuries before the Christian era. Zimridi was assassinated by Egyptians; he was probably a rebellious tributary. Supposing the expert testimony as to the date and contents of the tablet to be correct, then its testimony is strong on the point that civilization 3,500 years ago in Asia Minor was not confined to a few great centres, but was widespread. Each minor city may have had its archives, its chronicle of events and its correspondence, and portions of these local historical collections may yet be recovered. Mr. Bliss only uncovered about one-fourth of the hill of Lachish. He thinks that when the remainder is dug up and sifted that his single tablet will be supplemented by many others. Another point on which the evidence of the ancient fortress is strong is that the civilization supplanted by the Israelites was superior to their own.

But all this was a matter of indifference to the workmen. One of them described the tablet as a bar of soap, showing that he knew one element in civilization which the men of the desert are usually supposed to ignore. While the aims of the white employer were dark to them, their manner of life was equally mysterious to him. No matter how widely the tents of the tribe were scattered, each knew the position of all the rest. "We would send a guard out into the wilderness, apparently so vast and empty," says the author, "and he would presently return with the person required. We seemed to live in the midst of a complex, invisible society. It was uncanny." On these wild people the idea of harvest time had a romantic hold. They could not be kept at the work of digging, for they grudged losing a share in the gay times, when the whole village turned out, the men to reap and the women to glean. Aside from a grotesque freedom of speech, these people, peasants as they were, shared the "charming manners of the East." In general, they showed the traits which are often said to be lacking in the Orientals—that is, faithfulness, honesty, good-temper, and submission to authority. If these wanderers on the borders of what was once the land of the Philistines—for the hill of Lachish is about sixteen miles eastward from Gaza, as famous in the career of Samson as early Troy in that of Heracles—have not retained the education of their remote predecessors, they still have the same suavity of manner which must have characterized the ancient Sidonians, who, too readily, gave themselves up to ease even in times of danger. The proof is now forthcoming that the manner of the East is not of recent origin. It looks back to a time when life was more progressive there than it is now; when culture of a kind not inferior in some respects to that of the present day in Western lands was common throughout Syria.

ENGLISH JOURNALISM.

ITS RELATION TO LITERATURE—THE PROFESSION AND ITS PROFESSORS—THE NEW DEPARTURE OF "THE DAILY NEWS."

London, April 17.

A rather remarkable thing has happened. A toast to "Literature" has been proposed at a public dinner—that is not remarkable—it has been replied to by an eminent judge, and the eminent judge has spoken with civility and interest of journalism. That would not, I suppose, strike you as remarkable in America. It is remarkable here, where journalism, for all its lofty tone in print, holds a personal and social position below that of America, and very much below that of France. The judge was Sir Francis Jeune, president of the Probate and Admiralty Court; one of the three or four great positions on the Bench. Sir Francis said that literature had now taken journalism into partnership. If it were necessary to admit that journalism was literature in a hurry, it was literature still, and some of it of a high order, though perhaps ephemeral. It was, moreover, responsible for a great deal of the welfare of the nation.

If this be an unusual tone, the journals and journalists are themselves chiefly to blame. I don't know a sharper contrast than between the omniscient and apostolic tone in which the English journalist with a pen in his hand discusses the affairs of the universe, and the tone in which the same journalist speaks of his own profession. We all know how he thunders from the Mount Sinai of Printing House Square, or Shoe Lane. There is no lack of self-assertion in any of the great journals of this country. They all speak with authority, and some of them with a just authority. They are teachers and masters, and to some extent rulers of the land.

But if you have occasion—most people do not—to know much of their private relation to the world which in their professional capacity they direct, you may well be struck with the humbleness of their attitude. They are in the world, but not of it. With a certain number of distinguished exceptions, they seem to regard themselves and their colleagues as holding a position of inferiority. To be a journalist is to be nobody, save for the purposes of journalism. The rule of the anonymous is carried so far that it is deemed an act of presumption that a journalist should be anything but a journalist; should have an individuality; should think himself on an equality with those to whom he supplies information and opinions. He belongs, in his own view, to a different and a lower caste. He is not quite sure that journalism is a profession, as law and theology are.

The Bar and the Church are not afflicted with this kind of humility. They take each their own place. They have an esprit de corps. They are great trade-unions. They assert themselves, not only in court and in church, but in the world. The barrister respects the barrister; the clergyman respects the clergyman; and both would be much surprised if others did not respect them, and if their colleagues did not so carry themselves as to win respect; nay, to exact it, if need be. Not so the English journalist. He seems content with his lowliness. He thinks it presumptuous to aspire to a condition not of dependency. He looks askance upon a journalist who attempts anything outside of his profession. Sometimes, it is true, members of this singular guild climb into Parliament. Sometimes, though more rarely, they gain a foothold in society. Sometimes they write books or mingle in affairs. In each case they are thought ambitious and overconfident. If there were a spirit of comradeship, or even a corporate spirit, such successes would be welcomed. The immense power of the profession would be used, fairly and honorably, to advance the interests of these successful members of the profession, or, at least, to recognize them. Everybody knows that the contrary is true.

Does anybody know why? Mere jealousy will not explain it. There are jealousies elsewhere; all ranks and conditions are honeycombed with them. I can think of no explanation except the one first suggested: the explanation of conscious inferiority. The fact that so many journalists are new men may have something to do with it. They have come up from below, and have brought with them the feelings and opinions of that lower stratum of life. They allow themselves to be buffeted. They hang about lobbies. They are treated—since I have mentioned the word lobby I may as well say so—with something very like contempt by the legislators who are dependent on them. The journalists of Hungary have just had a contest with their Parliament, and won it by the simple expedient of a strike. The Parliamentary reporters in England have had, and still have, every reason to resent their treatment by both Houses of Parliament. Now and then they remonstrate or address a petition to the authorities. Their grievances are perhaps admitted to be just, but they remain unredressed; for various reasons. The authorities would redress them if they could; but the point is that the journalists submit. Why do they submit?

The profession of journalism in England may in truth boast not only of many able and accomplished men, but of men perfectly capable of holding their own in any company, in any position. They are capable of a much broader life than the one they choose to lead. They could, not all at once, but in time, put their profession on a level with other professions. A few of them are perfectly aware of this. A few of them do belong to other worlds than that of Fleet Street. The two or three men whose names occur at once to anybody who knows the truth are the names of the men who hold this dual position, and who adorn the one as much as the other. They are actively concerned in the two or three organized efforts for the improvement of journalism. There are others of equal rank, whose activity is less; there are others who hold entirely aloof. It is this want of common effort and a common purpose which makes individual effort so barren. There is, for example, an Institute of Journalists, with a membership of thousands. Do many of the leading editors or newspaper owners in London belong to it, or take part in its proceedings? I think not. Their names, at any rate, do not appear. Yet it is in such directions that success is to be looked for.

An enlargement of "The Daily News" is announced, which will henceforth "on most days consist of ten or twelve pages." "Thus," adds the advertising conductor, "vastly increasing the quantity of intelligence." That is hardly a logical sequitur. There are to be, however, "new and interesting features," for which all journalists look eagerly, and perhaps the public also. There is, I must admit, something spasmodic about this elaborate new prospectus. I will not use the word desperate. The condition of "The Daily News" is one of decay, not of desperation. It is no secret in the profession that it has fallen off heavily in circulation, and that its profits, once large, have come down to a low figure.

The authority of the paper has also much diminished. Since Mr. Frank Hill's departure it has cried aloud for an editor and found him not. After two or three experiments which were not thought successes, the editorship was turned over to the manager, Mr. J. R. Robinson. It may be quoted as evidence of his success that he is now Sir J. R. Robinson. A grateful party, or a grateful Prime Minister, or the judgment of the party Whips, rewarded Mr. Robinson's good intentions with, I think, a knighthood. That was on the Queen's last birthday, if my memory serves me. The honor gave pleasure on personal grounds to the new knight's friends. It did perhaps cause surprise among journalists, and also among those numerous members of the Gladstonian party who have long taken critical views of the spirit and method in which this curious paper had been edited. Sir J. R. Robinson is a good manager; in some respects an excellent one. He has, at times, done much for the paper in that capacity. But, for some reason, the period of decadence set in; probably because of the difficulty about an editor. A newspaper does really need an editor. It will not, as a rule or for a long period, edit itself. The conditions of politics in this country during the last eight years have been extremely difficult. It was no time for putting the helm in the hands of amateurs or for transferring, shall we say, the chief engineer to the quarterdeck. Yet that is what has happened in this case.

Sir J. R. Robinson has probably done better than most business managers would have done. But the spirit of the counting-house is one thing and the spirit of the editorial rooms is, or ought to be, another. If the latter is to be made subservient to the former, the paper suffers; its tone changes; its attitude to the public changes, and the attitude of the public to the paper changes also. The tendency inside every newspaper office is to take too exclusively office views. That is true of most editorial rooms, no matter how independent of the business department they may be. It becomes much more marked in proportion as the ascendancy of the money clerk increases. The public is half forgotten, or is thought of as a milch cow with an indefinite quantity of milk, and an unlimited readiness to give down this agreeable fluid.

But the public is not a fool. If it were, whose would be the fault, if not the journals who have for so many years set themselves to tell the public what it ought to think, and to educate its judgment? The public is perfectly capable of perceiving in what spirit a paper is conducted, and whether the appeal it makes is to the intelligence. The appeal of "The Daily News" has been to party passion rather than to intelligence. That a party journal should take party views must, I suppose, be conceded. But it need not express them in a form which implies that its readers have no views of their own, and no power of judgment, or knowledge of facts. Nor need it be acrimonious. The tone of the Old Bailey advocate to an Old Bailey jury is not a good one for an important and once extremely powerful paper. Of course, "The Daily News" is still powerful, but it has lost authority to an extent which it is difficult to gauge. Too much blame need not be laid on Sir J. Robinson's shoulders. He is, in a measure, the victim of circumstances. Editors are certainly scarce, but the proprietors might during all this time have found one if they had tried, or if they had really appreciated the urgent need of the paper.

The new departure and new features are all very well, but they will not restore the intellectual balance of the paper. Literature is promoted to a higher place, and that is admirable, and will be more admirable still when the readers have learned to have confidence in the literary judgment of the reviewer. There is an article by Mr. Andrew Lang on the Anniversary of Culloden—not a very thrilling or even fresh topic. There are Literary Notes. There is an article on Richmond Park, and a plea for Nightworkers, and a column of gossip about the Budget, and there are three columns on Poetry of the Day. These seem to be the chief "new and interesting features" thus far. Mr. Lucy continues his excellent Pictures of Parliament, always one of the best things in the paper; but that is not a new feature. Those which I have mentioned are those of the first two days since the change. The editorial page, where the need of change was greatest, remains for the present what it was. The number of superlatives has not been decreased. The view is no broader; the sagacity no more marked; the temper is the same; the want of seriousness, in the sense of reasoned conviction, and the untrustworthiness of its judgment on its news, are as great as ever. There must be time. A journal is not revolutionized in a day. But one would like to feel sure that there is really to be a revolution.

G. W. S.

HOW PADEREWSKI LIVES.

From The Westminster Budget.

Paderewski's headquarters are in Paris. In one of the long avenues radiating from the Arc de Triomphe, the Polish pianist has fixed his abode, a pretty little bachelor apartment on the ground floor. Paderewski comes to Paris for repose and rest, and does his best to hide the fact of his re-entry from the horde of lady admirers and troublesome amateurs who bore him.

Unless by appointment, it is impossible to find Paderewski at home. You may hear the sounds of a pianoforte divinely played, but the concierge will assure you, with his best bow, "Il n'est pas chez lui Monsieur Paderewski." When Paderewski wishes to take his constitutional, there is often a most amusing comedy played outside his door. There are a few people who know his habits, and about the hour he goes out lie in wait for him. In this way, Paderewski has been caught several times. Now, however, he manages to outwit even these bores, for when he goes out a servant is sent on before, and if any suspicious loiterer is near, a cab is hailed and drawn up in the court. Paderewski steps in, drives off a few streets, till he is far enough away to get out and begin his promenade unmolested and in peace.

The first thing that strikes the eye as one enters Paderewski's salon is a table standing by the Erard pianoforte, on which lie an amusing assortment of cigarette cases in all styles, the majority being in silver. After you have studied these you notice the large pictures in oils of Paderewski himself, then the quantities of flowers in handsome baskets tied up with bright ribbons, the gifts of lady admirers. Paderewski is seldom up to time—so that before he will have come in you can notice everything—the silver wreaths, photographs, pictures, busts, bibelots.

BENTON IN "THE GLOBE" OFFICE.

From The Washington Post.

One of the upper stories of "The Globe" building on Pennsylvania-ave. was used for all the fashionable gatherings. It was known as Jackson Hall, and was the scene of many a grand ball and banquet. The publisher of "The Globe" reported the proceedings of both branches of Congress under contract with the Government. They were then published in the columns of the paper and made up into "The Congressional Globe." D. F. and E. V. Murphy, now the official stenographers of the Senate, were even in those days engaged in this work for the paper. Thomas H. Benton and Cass were daily visitors at the office, and were on speaking terms with everybody. Benton was a great stickler for absolute accuracy, and had