

## ON THE LINE

**The French People.** By Arthur Hassall. (William Heinemann. 6s.)—Hard is it for the Anglo-Saxon to seize the spirit of the people who have made experiments in the art of governing for the instruction of the world, the wayward children of politics, whom not to love, despite all faults, is impossible for those who really know them. If Mr. Hassall has not achieved his difficult task with complete success, he has at all events given us a lucid and satisfying bird's-eye view of French history. He has traced its continuity from the mediæval times to the present day. For instance, we are made to feel the analogy between Etienne Marcel's democratic movement after the reverse at Poitiers and Gambetta's provisional government after the fall of Napoleon III. The great movements which have determined the progress and tendency of the nation are brought out in bold relief. The sense of proportion which is observed throughout is specially commendable.

Half the book is given to the pre-revolution period. From the confused early beginnings, the fusing of the races, the decay of the Roman influence, we pass to the energy and capacities of the people during the crusades which gave France a leading position among the nations, and the steps by which the unity of France was achieved under Hugh Capet, Philippe Auguste and St Louis. The crusade against the Albigenses is interestingly described, "when it seemed as if the South would begin a municipal and democratic revolution dangerous to the church." After the strength and progress of France in