

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

THE IMPERIAL ISLAND. England's Chronicle in Stone. By J. F. Hunnewell. Boston: Ticknor and Company.

In this handsome volume, the author of "The Historical Monuments of France," "The Land of Scott," and other similar works, has given us the results of his personal observation made in a dozen tours through England in as many years; that is, the descriptions of scenery, views, etc., which form the foundation of the book, are from notes taken on the spot. But the book is something more than this. It is a grand historical structure reared on this foundation, wherein is followed and interpreted the history of England during twenty centuries, as told in her chronicles of stone. Mr. Hunnewell is an American, but he rightly regards the history of England as the earlier history of America also.

The history of America, he says, does not really begin with the colonization along the Atlantic coast. One of the Eastern families settling in the far West in one sense begins a history then; but no small part of what led to it and shapes the new life grew up in the place left behind; and there are ties still kept unbroken. So we in the New World—Norse, German, or English,—all one in kindred back in the past, look to an old home over the sea where a part of the race tarried for a long while, where another part has lived longer, and read its stone chronicle.

And, with respect to his point of view as an American, he adds:—

The stone chronicle of England cannot be read well by eyes other than those which look with sympathy on the men of the past and the work of their hands. To such eyes, the gray text will show the great story it holds, garlanded with the bright daisies, green hawthorn or ivy, and red-berried holly, which the old painters loved and drew on the leaves of their books, but which in the monumental record of England spread around the stone letters a beauty given by no mortal hand.

The field covered by the book is a wide one. After a survey of the physical features of the island, the author begins its history with Stonehenge and the other Celtic or pre-Celtic remains of ancient Britain, Roman Britain, follows whose extant ruins are chiefly the Roman Wall and such military stations as Regnum, Pevensey, Dover, Richborough, Reculver. A map of Roman Britain, showing the wall, is most interesting in this connexion. The paucity of records in stone from Saxon, Angle and Danish times necessitated but brief mention of the period of the "Making of England;" but the succeeding Norman period is treated much more fully. The Normans, says Mr. Hunnewell, surpassed the Romans in the grandeur of their mighty towers; and in illustration of their military architecture he gives detailed descriptions of Pevensey Castle, Portchester, Dover, Colchester, Norwich, the Tower, and Windsor, most of which are Roman or Anglican works adopted and transformed by the Normans. Christian Art is illustrated by several fine views of the remains of monasteries and abbeys, minsters and parish churches; and Alnwick, Warkworth, Durham, Kenilworth, Warwick, and other strongholds bring before us the civil history of the Dane period; and, finally the new era of modern life and history which opened in the reign of Henry VIII. is illustrated by several views of the great residences. All the illustrative plates, of which there are fifty-two, have been obtained from works of recognised authority; but in every instance possible, the author has verified them by personal examination. The work has an index which with appendix and notes are very useful. Altogether, the publishers are to be congratulated on the production of a work that is typographically worthy of the subject; and the author, on adding to our historical records a work that should find a place beside the histories of England in every library.

LABOUR, LAND, AND LAW. A SEARCH FOR THE MISSING WEALTH OF THE WORKING POOR. By William A. Phillips. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

The alternative title of this book sufficiently explains its purpose. In it is discussed the relations of law to labour and land; land monopoly and slavery being denounced as twin robbers of labour. Mr. Phillips has been a member of the Congressional Committees on Public Lands and on Banking and Commerce, and carries the authority of experience in his historical and logical treatment of the subject. The author has undertaken to present a view of the rights of workingmen: he traces the effect of the different forms of land-owning, and the gradual change from master-workmen to capitalist-employer, and considers fully the organisation of capital, the formation of trades and guilds, of trades-unions and labour-societies. The history of the land question is traced from the earliest times down to the present, with the effect of land monopoly and the consequent aristocracy of land. The political and social system of ancient Israel is considered, and the fact prominently brought out that it reached its highest development when the lands over which it exercised its sway were held in common for the use of the whole people, and that its decadence came with

the growth of land monopoly and agrarian aristocracy. History is followed through the empires of Egypt, Chaldea, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, and through the middle ages; and full consideration is given to the Christian system as its principles affect society and organized government; to the Mahometan system, and the governments and forms of society founded on it; to land and labour in Russia and Asiatic countries; to the land system of modern Europe; and to the British Empire. The condition of Ireland under absentee landlordism is candidly and convincingly treated. The author then considers in a most thorough manner the history of the land polity in America, showing the tendency to an aristocracy of wealth there, which is leading to a system of land tenure that, with a great population, will be terrible for the working poor. He regards it as certain that such a form of land-holding and a free government cannot exist together. The chapters on Corporations, Shadow of a Coming Aristocracy, and Remedies, are three very valuable chapters, which should be studied closely by every student of political economy; while the whole book exhibits such research that all concerned in the present contest between Labour and Capital may profit much from its careful perusal.

POETS AND PROBLEMS. By George Willis Cooke. Boston: Ticknor and Company.

The author has written this volume for no other reason, as he says, than that he enjoyed the task; and the admirers of Tennyson, Ruskin, and Browning, the three writers he has treated of, will be grateful to him for the pleasure he has also afforded them. The book contains four essays, the first of which—the Poet as Teacher—points out the true nature of the poet's art, and we then turn for illustration to the three greatest living writers. The three essays dealing with them respectively are accounts and full studies of the life and work of each. One hundred and sixty-nine pages are devoted to Tennyson, ninety-three to Ruskin, and one hundred and twenty-one to Browning. Incidentally, also, the merits and demerits of many other poets and writers are dwelt upon and critically examined, such as Wordsworth, Keats, Swinburne, Rousseau, Goethe, Emerson, Carlyle, Mrs. Browning, and others. Mr. Cooke does not quote much from his three principal writers; but rather seeks to guide his readers to their works themselves. Of Tennyson he says: "He has the gift of pathos and sympathy, but not the gift of humour," and that "he is the incarnate voice of cultured and refined England in his time." Of Ruskin, "In the history of the art revival in England, the name of one man will appear as among the greatest of the causes leading to it. The greatest of art critics, John Ruskin, has taught the English the serious meaning of art, and in what manner it may contribute to the elevation and advancement of the noblest human interests." "To the revolutionary period Ruskin does not belong, either with his head or with his heart. . . . Even less is he to be ranked with the men of the present time of scientific enthusiasm, for at all points is he the critic and opponent of science in its evolutionary and agnostic tendencies." And further, "No other religious teacher of this century has taught more that is wholesomely inspiring and intrinsically religious." Mr. Cooke is an ardent admirer of Browning. His chief characteristic, he declares, is "light." "We accept him as a master." "He is an original force in literature, never an imitator, but one to arouse and stimulate all who come after him. He stands apart by himself as a poet. He had no forerunner, and he is likely to have no successor." "No English poet, unless it is Shakespeare, will yield so much of thought for the attentive reader as Browning."

GERMAN SIMPLIFIED. By Prof. A. Knoflach. New York: P.O. Box 1550. Toronto: David Boyle, 353 Yonge Street.

We commend this German course to anyone wishing to learn a language that is fast becoming as necessary to the man of business as it for long has been to the man of culture. Several improved methods of acquiring German have superseded the old one of working on the grammar; but the objection to most of them is that they are nearly useless for all practical purposes. They are constructed too much on the "Have you the white hat of the uncle of the baker" principle. In this system of Mr. Knoflach, however, we have nothing of these useless constructions. It is divided into forty-four lessons, containing each a plain statement of a rule, illustrated by copious exercises in living, practical German and English, with keys to both, vocabularies, and simply-constructed tables of declensions and moods. At a slight expense of time daily one could soon acquire from a study of this system a very serviceable knowledge of the language, and the groundwork of a thorough knowledge of German literature. The system is conveniently arranged in twelve separate numbers, any one of which may be bought separately.