

## III.—THE LATEST PALESTINIAN DISCOVERIES.

BY WILLIAM HAYES WARD, D.D., NEW YORK CITY.

A FEW weeks ago President Bliss, of the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut, who is now visiting this country, told me that he had learned that his son, Mr. Frederick J. Bliss, in the course of his excavations at the mound of Tel-el-Hesy, in Southern Palestine, had found a cuneiform tablet. The report seemed to me so extraordinary, so beyond hope almost, that I could hardly credit it, and I awaited with the greatest curiosity the fuller report which I knew must soon follow if the fact were as stated. We now have the first authentic announcement of the discovery in a letter to the London *Times* of July 1st, 1892, from James Glaisher, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund. He says that Mr. Bliss, who has been continuing the excavations begun at Tel-el-Hesy two years ago by Dr. Flinders Petrie, under charge of the Palestine Exploration Fund, has found in the débris of that ancient mound, previously identified by Major Conder and Dr. Petrie as Lachish, a cuneiform tablet with a number of seal cylinders of a Babylonian type, although evidently made, some of them, in Phœnicia or Egypt. This tablet has been examined by Professor Sayce, who offers a hasty tentative translation, from which, if yet imperfect, we may gather that it contains a message sent to Zimrida, Governor of Lachish, under the Egyptian king Amenophis IV., who claimed authority over Palestine and the Phœnician coast. The following is Professor Sayce's translation :

[To] the Governor [I], O my father, prostrate myself at thy feet. Verily thou knowest that Baya (?) and Zimrida have received thy orders (?); and Dan-Hadad says to Zimrida : " O my father, the city of Yarami sends to me, it has given me three *masar*, and three . . . and three falchions." Let the country of the king know that I stay, and it has acted against me ; but till my death I remain. As for thy commands (?) which I have received, I cease hostilities, and have despatched Bel (?)-banilu ; and Rabi-ilu-yi has sent his brother to this country [to strengthen me ?].

It will easily appear that this translation is, in large part, uncertain and obscure, and will be corrected later ; but the important fact remains clear that on the soil of Palestine, in the ancient mound which represents the city of Lachish—if we suppose Tel-el-Hesy to represent Lachish, according to the identification by the scholars of the Exploration Fund, or Gath, if we accept Professor John A. Paine's identification—a written record has been found of a date fifty years before the generally accepted date of the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt ; that in it is mentioned a governor of Lachish called Zimrida, and that Palestine was at that time in a state of political rebellion against the established Egyptian power.

This would be interesting and important enough of itself, but we must show its relation to the more abundant records of Palestine belonging to