

Talks about Books.

THE London Tract Society has invaded the wide domain of Oriental Historic Lore in its recently published Bypaths of Bible knowledge. Sir William Dawson contributes to the series a popular work on the Physical Features of Egypt and Syria. Wallis Budge deals with The Dwellers on the Nile and Babylonian Life and History; the Rev. J. King with the Temple Hill at Jerusalem; an anonymous author, with Cleopatra's Needle; and the Rev. Dr. Selah Merrill, well known in connection with the topography of Palestine, with Galilee in the time of Christ. Other books of the series are Sir J. Risdon Bennett, M. D., on the Diseases of the Bible; W. N. Grosser on the Trees and Plants of the Bible; and H. Chichester Hart on the Animals of the Bible. But the favourite of the Tract Society is the Rev. A. H. Sayce, LL.D. of Queen's College, Oxford, Professor of Comparative Philology, and thus Deputy to Professor Max Müller. He furnishes Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments; Assyria, its Princes, Priests, and People; and now The Hittites, the story of a Forgotten Empire.

Professor Sayce is a scholar and a many sided one. So far at least as history and philology are concerned, he seems to say with Terence, "*Humani nihil a me alienum puto.*" He has gained well deserved laurels for honest work in Assyrian and Accadian studies, and has been the pioneer in Hittite research. His travels in Asia Minor, Egypt, and other eastern lands, have not been without fruit to the tree of knowledge. And, taking him all in all, there is no Englishman to-day whose scientific activities are more worthy of commendation. But his treatment of the father of History is hardly fair. Strabo once said that Megasthenes was rather the master fabulist than the master historian of Alexander the Great: and the Oxford professor is inclined to say the same of Herodotus relatively to his times, although most historians regard him as truthful, and find historic significance even in his very errors of judgment. In his Comparative Philology, Professor Sayce has exhibited a total incapacity to appreciate the genius of Turanian, including native American, languages. His classical brethren of Oxford have rapped him severely over the knuckles for dabbling in disputed questions of Greek Philology. And, no later than last November, Mr. Renouf, the President of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, replying to a somewhat impertinent criticism of his work by his colleague, said: "Why should Professor Sayce, who is so high an