THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

MESSRS. BLACKWOOD & SONS have published the Inaugural Lecture with which Professor Patrick opened the session and occupied his Chair of Biblical Criticism and Biblical Antiquities in the University of Edinburgh. The title of the lecture is *The Conservative Reaction in New Testament Criticism* (8vo, pp. 32, 6d.).

Professor Patrick succeeds a conservative occupancy of his Chair in the person of Professor Charteris. It had been no surprise if he had begun by promising a 'forward movement.' But a forward movement is scarcely possible to-day. Even on the Continent, if we except Professor Holtzmann, struggling to keep together the scattered remnants of Tübingen, and Professors van Manen and Steck, busily engaged scattering the last of these fragments to the winds, there is no forward movement discernible. When Professor Patrick's Chair was founded in 1846 the theory of Baur was dominant. All the traditional views with regard to the authorship, date, and inter-relations of the New Testament books had been set aside, and any opposition to the prevailing theory 'was branded as the infallible index of intellectual narrowness.' Fifty years have passed. By the nearly unanimous consent of even continental scholarship we are back to the dates and decisions which were accepted before Strauss and Baur arose.

Is the criticism of the last fifty years barren of all result then? The stiffest conservative would not say so. He would say that it has been of great service in proving its own inefficiency. The history of criticism, he would say, is the best refutation of criticism. And Professor Patrick, who is not a stiff conservative, does not say so. He says that it has brought us one inestimable benefit. It has taught us to reverse our method of study. Before the Tübingen period, men formed their theory of inspiration first and then went to work on the New Testament; now men go to work on the New Testament unfettered by any theory of inspiration, simply as historical study, and they form their theory of inspiration out of the facts which that study has brought to light.

Professor Cheyne's new book, of which a fuller account is given later, contains a historical exposition of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah.

This fine poem, as he calls it, this 'holy of holies in the temple of the Old Testament,' as he further describes it, belongs, he believes, to the age of Ezra, and expresses the 'sanctified ambi-

tions of some of the best Judæans' then. It is not a purely imaginary description. It is a deeply felt meditation by 'some tender-hearted, zealous, and enthusiastic man' on certain melancholy facts well known to him and his readers. Of all the poems in its cycle, it is the one 'most obviously occasioned by contemporary historical facts.' What were they? Who is its suffering servant?

In a late prophecy of the Book of Isaiah (57[1]) certain unknown martyrdoms are commemorated. The words are—

> The righteous perishes, but no man lays it to heart;
> Men of piety are taken, but none considers
> That for the wickedness (of the time) the righteous is taken.

These martyrdoms, Professor Cheyne thinks, had taken place in the years preceding the arrival of Ezra in Jerusalem. Malachi speaks of certain persons living then as 'fearers of Jehovah,' and intimates that they belonged to the poorer classes. They stood out from the general body of the indifferent as pious men whose poverty only offered a reason to their neighbours for avoiding their religion, and whose 'nonconformity' was troublesome to the tyrannical rich men, who falsely accused them before the judges and obtained their condemnation to death. The great religious thinker of the age of Ezra looked back upon these men and saw them irradiated by the light of a Divine purpose. He fused the different nameless martyrs and confessors into a single colossal form, and identified this ideal personage with the true people of Israel. But in doing so, adds Professor Cheyne, he may very likely have thought of the prophet Jeremiah, who certainly regarded himself and his disciples as conjointly the sole representative of the true Israel.

In *The Homeric Centones*, which the Cambridge Press has published (8vo, pp. 83, 5s.), Professor Rendel Harris has as little to make a book on as ever a man had. Yet he has made a delightful book upon it. You may read it through in less than an hour, but you will read it through. And you have added one item to your stores of knowledge.

The book is written to tell us about the influence of Homer on the early Christian Church. It is natural to expect that Greek-speaking writers should be acquainted with the masterpieces of Greek literature. St. Luke is credited with an acquaintance with Dioscorides. How much more likely that he should know the mightier models of Greek style and speech. There is an early Christian poem, the *Christus Patiens*, long supposed to be the work of Gregory of Nazianzus, which tells the gospel in language borrowed from six plays of Euripides. Mrs. Browning, who attributes the poem to Apollinarius, in her Greek Christian Poets, gives a rendering of its opening verses, and places by their side a translation of the opening verses of Euripides' *Medea*, which they imitate. Here is the *Medea*—

> Oh, would ship *Argo* had not sailed away
> To Colchos by the rough Symplegades!
> Nor ever had been felled, in Pelion's grove,
> The pine, hewn for her side! So she, my queen,
> Medea, had not touched this fatal shore,
> Soul-struck by love of Jason!

And this is the opening of *Christus Patiens*—

> Oh, would the serpent had not glode along
> To Eden's garden-land—nor ever had
> The crafty dragon planted in that grove
> A slimy snare! So she, rib-born of man,
> The wretched mis-led mother of our race,
> Had dared not to dare on beyond worst daring,
> Soul-struck by love of—apples!

But the influence of Homer on the early Church far outweighed the influence of all the rest of the writers of Greece. Professor Blass and Professor Rendel Harris believe that it can be traced in the New Testament itself. There is a phrase in the Book of Acts (27[41]) which Professor Blass thinks St. Luke deliberately borrowed from

Homer's *Odyssey*. It is translated in our Authorized Version, 'they ran the ship aground.' But the Revisers have changed 'the ship' into 'the vessel,' for the word is most unusual. Thirteen times in the same chapter St. Luke uses the common word for ship (τὸ πλοῖον); in this place alone he uses an obsolete word (ἡ ναῦς). Why did he use it except that it was part of a phrase that was running in his mind? The special form (ἐπικέλλω instead of ἐποκέλλω) of the verb that goes with it is also quite unusual in prose.

There is a still more striking example in St. Luke's Gospel. The Revised Version translates 23^{53} in this way: 'And he took it down, and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn in stone, where never man had yet lain.' But the Cambridge *Codex Bezae* adds: 'and after it had been laid there, he put unto the sepulchre a stone, which twenty men could scarcely roll.' Several years ago Professor Rendel Harris suggested that that interesting addition was due to Homer. He thinks so still, and Professor Blass agrees with him. But whereas Professor Rendel Harris thought that the Homeric line had first appeared in the Latin translation, which is found page for page with the Greek in *Codex Bezae*, Professor Blass believes that St. Luke himself is the author of the sentence. In the first draft of his Gospel he had written these words, a direct recollection of a well-known passage in Homer's *Odyssey* (ix. 240), but left them out in the 'fair copy' which he made for Theophilus.

And there is a more remarkable example still. It is found in the Apocalypse. Says Professor Rendel Harris: 'When St. John wrote the vision of the dragon which attempts to destroy the Man-Child that is born into the world, he had in his mind the vision of Calchas in the second book of the *Iliad*, who narrates the devouring of a brood of nestlings and their mother by a fiery-red dragon.' Then he compares the original language of Rev $12^{1.3}$ with Homer's *Iliad*, ii. 308, and proceeds: 'The object of the dragon is to devour the brood, but this is not permitted in the Apocalypse, where both Mother and Child escape. It is interesting to observe that in the apocalyptic writer's mind, the mother is really a bird, for when the dragon proceeds to persecute her, she takes to herself the two wings of a great eagle, and flies into the desert. Moreover, she has a whole brood of nestlings, and not merely the single Man-Child; for the writer tells us that the dragon proceeds to make war with the remnant of her seed, those, namely, who keep the commands of God and the testimony of Jesus.'

But the purpose of the book is not to show the influence of the Bible of the ancient Greek upon the Christian Bible, it is to trace its influence on early Christian literature, and especially to impart some knowledge, which Professor Rendel Harris has gathered, about the famous Homeric Centones.

It is well known that on the introduction of Christianity into a new country, it was often found expedient to graft the new plant upon the stock of the old institutions of the country. But it has not been often observed that the very Bibles or sacred books already in existence were retained and made the ministers of the Covenant of Grace. The most striking case is the Homeric Cento. Verses or half verses of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of Homer were pieced together and made to tell the gospel story in poetry. The narrative of the Gospels was transferred from its natural simplicity into a ridiculous mimicry of the reverberating music of the Greek epic. But the device pleased the learned by its ingenuity, and deceived the unlearned by its affected stateliness. And from the second century to the sixteenth the Homeric Centones had a reputation that vied with the genuine Homer on the one hand and the Gospels themselves on the other. When printing was invented, it was not long till a fine edition (1504) of the Homeric Centones issued from the Aldine Press, and within the century no less than five editions were produced. The last of these

editions was adopted as a school-book among the Jesuits.

Whatever else criticism does, it rouses interest. The period of Old Testament history which has hitherto made the feeblest appeal to the interest of the ordinary student is that which followed the Exile. But criticism has been at work upon it. The accepted positions have been challenged. There has been hot controversy and the widest possible divergence of opinion. The post-exilic period is for the moment the most interesting period of all.

The latest writer on the post-exilic period is Professor Cheyne of Oxford. In the winter of 1897–98 Professor Cheyne accepted an invitation to deliver the third series of the 'American Lectures on the History of Religions.' He chose as his subject *Jewish Religious Life after the Exile*, and delivered six lectures in nine cities of America that winter. The lectures have now been published under the same title by Messrs. Putnams (8vo, pp. 270. 6s.).

A year or two ago, in reviewing Duhm's *Isaiah*, Professor A. B. Davidson spoke playfully of the great literary period of the Maccabees. 'The great writers on the Psalter have shown us how every skirmish of the day had its poet, and how every rise and fall in the spirits of the little army have been photographed in the Psalms which we sing.' Professor Cheyne would probably accept the picture seriously. And so, taking together the Maccabean age and the immediately preceding age, of which he writes the history here, he would find room for the great bulk of the literature of the Old Testament. For in the post-exilic period generally, he places, not only the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, but also Lamentations, Isaiah i.–xxxix. and xl.–lxvi., Micah, Genesis to Joshua, Ruth and Jonah, every one of the Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Daniel, and of course Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

Thus Professor Cheyne has abundance of literary material to work upon. He has also great freedom in the way he works upon it. He employs, he tells us, 'the two sister faculties, common-sense and the imagination.' These he brings to bear upon the exegesis and upon the history. 'In exegesis a happy intuition often throws a flood of light upon an obscure passage, and a similar remark is still more applicable to historical reconstruction.' But he has a right to claim that these intuitions are not purely accidental. 'They spring, in exegesis, from sympathy with an author, and a sense of what he can and what he cannot have said; in history, from a sedulously trained imaginative sense of antiquity, supported by a large command of facts.' In short, when the apparent exegesis of a passage will not suit, Professor Cheyne has free recourse to textual emendation; and when the historical facts are not sufficient, 'it devolves upon us,' he says, 'to fill up the deficiencies of the narrative by reasonable conjecture.'

In this way Professor Cheyne reads the history of post-exilic Judaism over again, and comes to new conclusions. Let us state his conclusions briefly.

In the year 537 B.C. Sheshbazzar, a Babylonian Jew of Davidic descent, was sent to Jerusalem by Cyrus, in accordance with his conciliatory policy, as governor of Judæa. He was accompanied by a suite, in which was certainly his nephew Zerubbabel, and very possibly the 'heads' of Jewish families, as reported in the famous list. Joshua was one of these 'heads,' and became the first high priest in the post-exilic sense. As the 'heads' would be accompanied with their families and dependants, they formed altogether a considerable party. But they were not numerous enough, or they were not influential enough, to affect the tone of society already in Judæa. And when, under the instigation of Haggai and Zechariah, the temple was rebuilt, the work was done, mostly, at anyrate, by the inhabitants of

Judæa who had not been carried captive, not by returned exiles.

In 520 B.C. Sheshbazzar was succeeded by his nephew Zerubbabel. The temple was completed in 516. From that moment should be dated the end of the Exile and the beginning of the post-exilic age. For the true Exile was not the deportation of the people, but the departure of Jehovah from the Land of Promise. Jehovah departed when the temple fell. When the temple was restored He returned again. 'At any moment after the coping had been laid the King of Glory might be expected to come in.' Hence it was the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the real builders of the second temple, who were also the real instruments in bringing the Captivity to an end.

Meantime there was trouble in Babylon. Usurpers had seized the throne of Nebuchadrezzar, and the central government was weak. It was then that Haggai and Zechariah conceived the daring project of anointing Zerubbabel king. Four Jews, probably the leaders of a party, arrived at Jerusalem with gifts of silver and gold from the wealthy Babylonian settlements. The treasure was converted, in accordance with a Divine direction, into a crown for Zerubbabel. This, as a historical fact, is of course new, but Professor Cheyne tells us how he came by it. We know that Zerubbabel was of the house of David; we know also that he had already received the Messianic name Branch or Sprout, a name coined perhaps by Jeremiah; all that remained then was to anoint him and announce his accession to the people. Now in Zec 6^{9-12} we are told that the prophet was commanded to take the silver and gold from the men who had come from Babylon and 'make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest.' Professor Cheyne believes that the name *Joshua* is a mistake. 'It is not improbable that a later editor, who did not comprehend the passage and wished to suggest a possible historical reference, has put the name of Joshua instead of Zerubbabel into the text.' In this movement, however, Zechariah was disappointed. Things righted themselves in Babylon. Tatnai, the satrap of Syria, came and gave trouble in Jerusalem. Zerubbabel disappeared. And 'the golden crown was no doubt melted down and converted into some needed ornament for the temple.'

The Jews who were living in Babylon had not forgotten Jerusalem all this while. The author of the first appendix to the Second Isaiah's prophecy (chapters 49–55) was endeavouring to stimulate them to a personal co-operation with the Judæan reformers, and the *élite* of their body were devoting themselves to the difficult task of bringing the traditional Jewish laws up to date. But their practical interest was not felt in Jerusalem until a Judæan Israelite, named Hanani, conceived the idea of travelling to Susa, the winter residence of the Persian kings, and induced Nehemiah to return with him to Jerusalem. This was after the Syrian revolt of 448 B.C. under Megabyzos, which the Jews probably kept clear of, and so were in favour with Artaxerxes, the king. It is certain, at anyrate, that Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem with firman and military escort, and at once set about his special mission, the repairing of the city walls.

Now the particular object of enmity to the Jews who were living in Babylon was the Samaritans. The Jews in Judæa itself could have borne with the Samaritans very well. 'The Samaritans were doubtless,' says Professor Cheyne, 'farther off from legal orthodoxy than the Jews, but the standard of orthodoxy even among the Jews cannot have been very high, especially in the country districts, where, in the absence of a strong central authority, gross superstitions still lingered. Nor is there any reason to think that the Samaritans ever gave up their interest in the great sanctuary of Judæa until they were forced.' They were forced to give it up by Nehemiah.

Professor Cheyne does not blame Nehemiah for that. He remembers that 'the religious isolation of the Jews on a strictly legal basis was an object of vital importance to the higher religion.' And he does not deeply sympathize with the Samaritans. For he finds it recorded that the orthodox Jews had already attempted to convert them and had failed. The record is in Is $65^{1.2}$. 'I offered admission' (this is Professor Cheyne's translation) 'to those who asked not after me; I offered my oracles to those who sought me not; I said, Here am I, here am I, to a class of men which called not upon my name. I have spread out my hands all the day to an unruly and disobedient people, who followed the way which is not good, after their own devices.'

There were faults, Professor Cheyne thinks, on both sides. The Jews were deficient in suavity, like Augustine of Canterbury when he tried in vain to unite the English and the Welsh in one Christian Church; the Samaritans, on their side, had as yet no religious receptivity. But what he finds most strange is that the same writer (probably) who thus spoke so harshly of the Samaritans for refusing to adopt the Jewish law, afterwards censured them for wishing to build a central sanctuary of their own. And it is the more extraordinary that he does so in words which logically would destroy also the temple at Jerusalem: 'Thus saith Jehovah, Heaven is my throne and earth my footstool. What house would ye build for me, and what place is my habitation? For all this has my hand made, and mine is all this, saith Jehovah' (Is $66^{1.2}$).

The enmity was increasing. Even before the arrival of Nehemiah, orthodox Jews in Judæa were sufficiently opposed to the Samaritans to use very strong language about their religious customs and to put their feelings into song. For Professor Cheyne believes that it was at this moment that Ps 16^{1-5} was composed. The speaker is 'the personified association of pious Israelites.' The Samaritans are they of whom he says, 'Their libations of blood I will not pour out; their (deity's) names I will not take on my lips.' Nehemiah's arrival strengthened this orthodox party in Jerusalem. Sanballat and Tobiah were driven into open hostility. It was Nehemiah that made the first official declaration of war.

The rest of the acts of Nehemiah are not recorded. Nor do we know the name and the religious tendency of the Tirshatha who succeeded him. If his successor was willing he was not able to cope with the aristocratic Jews who favoured an alliance with the Samaritans. The orthodox parties in Babylon were scandalized at the state of religious indifference into which Palestine fell, and Ezra, the scribe, was sent with a strong band to Jerusalem. It is the first great certain return of Jewish exiles to Palestine.

What Ezra did in Jerusalem we shall never know. For the account transmitted by the Chronicler in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah will not stand the tests of historical criticism. In particular, the story of the marriage reforms in Ezra 9, 10 is full of improbability. 'Such a delicate matter,' says Canon Cheyne, 'as the alteration of marriage customs cannot have been brought about so quickly and in such a rough and ready way. That the sight of Ezra, sitting with dishevelled hair in a stupor, and then the hearing of a solemn liturgical prayer, should have so unnerved the people who had married non-Jewish wives that they straightway volunteered to turn away their wives and their children, and that three days afterwards a still larger assembly should have gathered in cold, rainy weather in the open air, and sanctioned the appointment of a commission to compel the offenders to carry out this resolution, is surely incredible.'

Professor Cheyne does not take up this attitude out of consideration for Ezra. On the contrary, he thinks that Ezra was really much to blame. He was at first far too vehement in his language and vigorous in his demands. And he expresses a

fear 'that some too pliant persons may have given way to him.' If that is so, then, says Professor Cheyne, Ezra was guilty of a distinct denial of the Divine fatherhood—a doctrine expressed in the very first chapter of the narrative which introduces his Law-book. He feels bound to denounce this as much as he admires the very different attitude of the Apostle Paul. Nor can he forget the blessings which accrued to the English race through the union of a heathen king of Kent with a Christian princess from France. It is this recollection that compels him to 'shrink with horror' from the conduct of Ezra.

On the other hand, there were extenuating circumstances. It is by the religion of its mother that a child is influenced. Now the religion of the Samaritan mothers was local and unprogressive, being based on ancient custom; whereas the religion of Ezra was a book-religion, which to a considerable extent recognized the claims of development. His vehemence and rigour were therefore but the excess of his religious patriotism. And besides, the men who had these foreign wives had turned away the Jewish wives of their youth in order to marry them. And the prophet 'Malachi' mentions the sad divisions in families which had then taken place. Malachi feels himself unfit, indeed, to reform the abuse, and he (or some not much later writer) has added this appendix to his prophecy: 'Behold, I send you the prophet Elijah before Jehovah's great and terrible day come. He shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse' (Mal $4^{5.6}$).

Ezra failed in the matter of the mixed marriages, and his failure called Nehemiah a second time from Susa to Jerusalem. Nehemiah succeeded where Ezra failed. He succeeded because he had the royal authority, and because of his great personal qualities. In short, this was the work for which Nehemiah was fitted. Ezra was fitted for other work than this. And now Professor Cheyne, who fears that he may seem to have underrated Ezra, represents him as the author of two grand achievements. In the first place, it was he and the Jews who came from Babylon with him that regarded themselves as the true Israelites; formed themselves into a national assembly—the ideas of the Church and the nation being henceforth inseparably fused together; became known as the 'Zion' of the later chapters of Isaiah, the 'poor' and 'needy' of the later Psalms, and the beginning of the great Jewish Church. In the second place, he was the author or at least the editor of the Law-book which formed the chief portion of the Priestly Code. And it is the possession of a written religious Law that has enabled the Jewish community to survive the centuries of persecution. Therefore, as the compiler or one of the compilers of that Law, Ezra is greater than the founder of an empire.

Professor Cheyne does not deny that this is a reconstruction of history. 'It is so,' he says, 'and it ought to be so. That the right moment for such an attempt has arrived, no one who knows the course of recent criticism can deny, and historical students will, I believe, recognize that the results here given have considerable probability.'

The second volume of the DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE is making steady progress, and should be ready in the Spring. It will contain a larger proportion of important articles than any other volume is likely to contain. The following fall within its scope:—'Food,' by Professor Macalister; 'Galatia,' by Professor Ramsay; 'God,' by Professors A. B. Davidson and W. Sanday; 'Gospels,' by Professor Stanton; 'Hebrews,' by Professor Bruce; 'Holy Spirit,' by Professor Swete; 'Incarnation,' by Principal Ottley; 'Isaiah,' by Professor Smith; 'Israel,' by Professor Ryle; 'Jacob,' by Professor Driver; 'Jerusalem,' by Lieut.-Col. Conder; 'Jesus Christ,' by Professor Sanday.