

A NOVEL OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CENTURIES.

Whereas in classical antiquity poetry and the drama had attained an ideal state of perfection, the novel does not appear to have reached any development above mediocrity, and there are very few stories handed down to us from ancient times. This state of things continued into the Christian era, and considering the specimens we discover we need not be sorry that so little has been preserved. One of the fortunate survivors which Dr. Bernhard Pick has translated from the Greek is the story of "Joseph and Asenath." It dates originally from the fifth century or even earlier and was quite popular in its time.

It may serve us as a specimen of the taste prevailing among the early Christians, their love for visions, their admiration for pious penance, their joy in evidence of the grace of God to those who humble themselves and in the triumph of faith.

The literary merit of the story is poor, but we will naturally take an interest in the psychology of the age which produced it, the demands of the reading public and the supply with which the authors of those days satisfied them. From this point of view the story is more than curious, it is instructive and decidedly of historical value, and as such we offer it to our readers.

Those who have seen Mr. Louis Napoleon Parker's dramatic production of "The Story of Joseph" in its brilliant Oriental setting will find an additional interest in this early Christian romance on the same theme. Mr. Parker seems to have successfully braved the traditional prejudices of the public in utilizing one of the many possible dramatic themes among Biblical subjects which have hitherto been systematically avoided by our modern playwrights.

 CIVIC CLUBS IN FRANCE.

Those who have been following the relations between church and state in France will be interested to learn that republicans of all the opposition parties have come to the conclusion that not only is it not yet time to give up the struggle against the church and the reactionary forces under its control, but that on the contrary it is necessary to organize a more steady and methodical course of anti-clerical action. For this purpose they have founded a system of civic clubs (*Cercles civiques*), most important of which is the Cercle Berthelot at Paris, which with its headquarters at 49 Boulevard Saint-Michel serves as a connecting link to unite all similar associations. The president of this Parisian organization is M. André Berthelot, and its general secretary is M. Victor Charbonnel, who, it will be remembered, broke with the Catholic church when it failed to support his plans for a revival of the religious parliament at Paris.

In the opinion of the charter members of the Cercle Berthelot, these civic clubs should possess the following characteristics:

(1) A permanent home where members can meet for social and business matters; (2) a reading room which would contain the daily papers, reviews, books and records; (3) regular meetings at stated intervals on definite days when members can become acquainted with each other; (4) efforts to estab-

lish a more essential unity of thought and action among liberal thinkers for mutual aid; (5) an effort to create a new family and social life by means of small or large gatherings; (6) they should endeavor to take part in political action that will tend to assure the absolute independence of school and government from the church.

Extra meetings have already been held on the occasion of the visit to the city of various friends of the club and noted thinkers outside of Paris in France and other countries.

THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND THE MAN WHO HAD ONLY RICHES.

BY PERCIVAL HAYWARD.

There was a certain rich man who was clothed in sympathy and humility; the fine linen of large-heartedness and faith was wound about him and his loins were girded with the strong bands of charity; the doorway and the fire-side of his home were barren of costly adornment and were scarred by the budding industry of his children, but the sumptuous elegance of peace and the stately ornaments of piety made it a palace known for its beauty far and wide.

And there was a certain beggar named, "The Man Who Had Only Riches," who was laid at his gate full of sores. His sores were the festering pangs of discontent, of social jealousy and of ungratified personal ambition. Moreover the dogs of the idly curious, the fawning self-seekers and the social parasites came and licked his sores and made his life doubly hard.

Then the beggar saw that he had been judged before the great judgment seat of human life and had been found wanting. And in the hell that he had made for himself he lifted his eyes and saw the rich man in the bosom of his large abundant life and said, "Have mercy upon me and give me but a drop of the wealth of character and of soul that brighten your humble home; for I am grievously tormented."

But the rich man was compelled to make reply, "Gladly would I give it if I could. Gifts of silver alone can be given from hand to hand. Such gifts as you desire can come only from your inner life; they must be forged in the hot furnace of your own soul struggle; they must grow in the garden of the spirit world and only as you have watered them with the sweat of your effort and nourished them with purity, piety and love can they ever bloom; neither man nor God can give them.

"Between the life of the soul and the mere life of things there is a great gulf fixed; the laws of God have made it so."

PREHELLENIC AMULETS.

Woermann, in his *Geschichte der Kunst*, Vol. I, publishes a small rare amulet (a) which Wolfgang Reichel (*Ueber vorhellenische Götterkulte*, Vienna, 1897) regards as an amulet deposited with the dead in the tomb to protect them in their journey into the nether world. We assume that the figure represents the dead person and the dove overhead represents the tutelary goddess. The amulet represents the period of Mycæan art.