

The bookmaking and editing seem perfect, and in the whole work we find nothing to cavil at, but everything to commend.

#### ST. PAUL THE TRAVELLER AND THE ROMAN CITIZEN.\*

Professor Ramsay's volume on St. Paul has grown out of lectures delivered at Auburn Theological Seminary, Johns Hopkins University, Harvard, and Mansfield College, Oxford. As the title indicates, they chiefly concern themselves with the outward conditions and movements of the apostle's life, not with his theology. In other words, they are based upon the Book of Acts rather than on the Epistles of St. Paul. In his researches in Asia Minor, Professor Ramsay found himself frequently consulting the Book of Acts, as one of the authorities for its topography, antiquities, and society. At first, as he owns, he was prejudiced against it as an authentic witness of first-century history; but gradually this prejudice was removed, and in its place there grew up entire confidence in it as a guide and an ally in obscure investigations. And the present volume is not so much a history of Paul for its own sake as a prolonged exhibition of the trustworthiness of Luke's narrative. It is an attempt to show that, instead of being the mere second-century compiler, groping and stumbling among unknown places, misunderstood circumstances, and anachronistic customs, or a mere dull editor with scissors and paste, collecting random scraps of sensational legends and gluing them together without intelligence, Luke is a historian of the first rank, trustworthy, and possessing a first-hand knowledge of the greater part of what he records, guided by an unflinching sense of proportion, which tells him what to omit and what to relate, and able to present his material in a clear and simple narrative. Certainly no one has a

better right to pronounce an authoritative judgment on the historicity of the Acts than Professor Ramsay. He has studied the history of the first century as very few have done, so that, as any of his readers could detect anachronisms in a nineteenth-century book, he is familiar with what is congruous and what incongruous with the first century; but, especially, he has carried this book open in his hand through the localities in which its scenes are laid. He possesses the knowledge of an expert, which justifies him both when he condemns the "error and bad judgment" which preponderate in what at present passes for historical criticism and when he assigns to the Book of Acts a highest place among historical works.

The importance of such a judgment, even limited and conditioned as it is, can scarcely be overestimated. The fresh light which Professor Ramsay throws on certain passages in the career of St. Paul is also considerable; and still more considerable is the sense of reality which he imparts to the whole narrative. He very truly remarks that Luke "expects a great deal from the reader . . . there are many cases in which to catch his meaning properly, you must imagine yourself standing, with Paul, on the deck of the ship or before the Roman official; and unless you reproduce the scene in imagination you miss the sense." The great and lasting merit of Professor Ramsay's book is that it enables even the unimaginative reader thus to see what is narrated. He will not always see what Professor Ramsay sees, still less will he always infer what Professor Ramsay infers; but he will feel that the ground he treads is solid, and the persons he hears of are real and living. The Book of Acts becomes a new book, and excites a new interest. Almost every suggestion made by Professor Ramsay will be contested by scholars; but no one will deny that he vivifies the narrative and proves its trustworthiness, and that St. Paul becomes more than ever a real figure and one of the greatest of men.

\* St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen. By W. M. Ramsay, D.C.L., LL.D., Professor of Humanity, Aberdeen. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$3.00.

*Marcus Dods.*

## NOVEL NOTES.

A VIRGINIA COUSIN AND BAR HARBOUR TALES. By Mrs. Burton Harrison. Boston and New York : Lamson, Wolfe & Co. \$1.25.

If certain gracefully unimportant books came from unknown authors, nothing need be said. But, unluckily, such is rarely if ever the case, for the reason that only the practiced pen can clothe commonplaces with grace. And, since a recognised place in national literature has its penalties as well as its privileges, a new book by Mrs. Burton Harrison cannot be passed by even with a silence that would be kind. Yet it is hard to know what to say about *A Virginia Cousin and Bar Harbour Tales*. Flowing smoothly from cover to cover, the three stories leave nothing more than a mental blur, too indistinct to be remembered longer than the turning of the leaves. All that remains is regret—for the author's vanished charm.

The characters are those of the author's earlier stories—the two typical matrons representing the old and the new régime ; the sophisticated clubman and his guileless cousin ; the subtle city girl and the hard-headed business man. They are all familiar, but they seem more unreal and remote than usual. And, whether in New York or at Bar Harbour or on the Blue Ridge, or “ leaning abstractedly against a column ” in Rome, they are always saying the same things, but less aptly and less wittily than they have said them before. This is trying, in view of the fact that no one does anything but talk. No incident interrupts the flow of conversation. A boy tumbles off his pony, but the others never stop talking ; and he begins again as soon as he gets his breath. A man falls out of a boat, and there is an effort here to have something happen. The machinery positively creaks with the strain ; but nothing does happen beyond a ducking and the making of an opportunity for the woman to ask the ducked man where his manners are.

Thus, in a dispirited way, as if the characters themselves were tired, the dialogue drags along. There is not a glimmer of the wit that sparkled through *The Anglomaniacs*. There is no sign of the fresh thought that gave interest to *A Bachelor Maid*. Indeed, at one par-

ticularly heavy point it becomes necessary to bring in as a vocal recruit a country corporal who does not belong to the old original set. He can scarcely be called an acquisition ; but he does what he is expected to do, and talks without stopping through seventeen pages. What about ? Let him answer who can say what it is all about.

A COMEDY OF SENTIMENT. By Max Nordau. New York : F. Tennyson Neely. \$1.50.

The fame of Herr Nordau's versatility has spread even here ; so that the discovery that he can write a clever novel will not be an astonishing addition to his other accomplishments. This is a clever novel ; or, to speak more accurately, it is a story written by a very able man—one who might be partial, unfair, shortsighted, and arrogant, as able men often are, but who could not write balderdash ; nor, from clumsiness, misrepresent what he actually understood. It is an episode in the life of a scientific man who falls into the toils of a designing woman, and has a narrow escape. We confess we should have respected him more had he not escaped. In some respects he is most worthy, devoted to his mother, with whom he lives, delivering up to her his salary as he receives it, and having no secrets from her till Frau Ehrwein comes into his life. But there is another side of him which revolts us. While giving way to his sensual passions he is perfectly aware of his folly, and he exhibits a hard, calculating, and most unhumorous temper throughout his *liaison*, which is complicated by his weak and insincere attempt to play the part of devoted lover. As for Paula, the less said about her the better. Her efforts to entrap Bruchstädt are so noisy, violent, and vulgar that they would disgust a tavernhaunter ; and when he is in her toils she keeps him there by the grossest flattery for the most sordid pecuniary reasons. Those who read *The Comedy of Sentiment* within a reasonable time after reading a much greater book, *Jude the Obscure*, may observe a certain likeness between Paula and Arabella. But the dash of generosity in the rough, coarse Arabella is wanting in this woman of culture, who, if less ugly, is more corrupt. Of