

Italy—in Praeneste, in Assisi, Perugia, and more—and in the coast-towns such as Terracina and Circeii, there are abundant ruins, the study whereof sheds a strong light upon many obscure passages of Republican history.

Among these little-known ruins Professor Frothingham has spent many profitable months, and no student can fail to read his pages without notable illumination. Of course there are no unusual discoveries exploited, nor in one sense are any to be desired. What we do assuredly gain is a more intimate touch and fellowship with the world, say of Appius Claudius Caecus.

Not very many American tourists will have the zeal to follow down all the now obscure villages herein described, but no traveller should henceforth fail to read Professor Frothingham's enlightening twenty pages upon Verona, ere visiting that city; nor his description of the Roman relics at Turin, before one passes through that seemingly extremely modernized railroad centre.

Possibly the most useful part of the entire book, however, is the last chapter that relates to Istria and Dalmatia. The description of the palace of Diocletian at Spalato, although by no means the only one in current literature, is extremely vivid, and thanks to some excellent illustrations and plans gives a clear idea of the vast villa-fortress into which "Jovius", the last successful pagan emperor, retired to hear the tidings of the failure of the persecutions, and of the break-down of his over-ingenious imperial system. Incidentally Professor Frothingham here gives sufficient evidence that although in the fourth century Roman sculpture and painting were in decadence Roman architects were still able to produce impressive and noble effects, even if not in the approved classic style.

The book as a whole somewhat lacks in unity, and can best be read piecemeal; but this is no grievous defect for a work of this kind. It will no doubt soon find its place in every good classical library.

WILLIAM STEARNS DAVIS.

Geschichte des Untergangs der Antiken Welt. Von OTTO SEECK.

Dritter Band. (Berlin: Franz Siemenroth. 1909. Pp. 583.)

WITHOUT undue haste Seeck adds the third of five promised volumes to the two published in 1897 and 1901. The previous volumes dealt with Constantine's restoration of the unity of the empire after the disorders introduced by Diocletian's retirement, the tendency to social dissolution, the effect of barbarian intrusions, the administration of local and imperial government, and the history of religion and morals from primitive Greek times to the Homeric age. The present volume continues the last subject by an account of the oldest Greek mystery cults, the relation of philosophy to popular religion, the religious syncretism of the Roman Empire, and the character and fortunes of Christianity to the Nicene Council, with special interest in the internal conflicts of the Church.

The whole work so far is a collection of sketches written in a smooth and popular style, not significant by the contribution of new facts but as a construction and valuation of data already known. The constructive explanation is offered without discussion, the indication of sources with some critical observations being relegated to the *Anhang* which accompanies each of the volumes.

With a zest for explanation and a distrust of the validity of the religious consciousness Seeck derives religious phenomena from conditions non-religious. The Eleusinian mysteries presenting the hope of blessedness beyond death were the invention of a noble clan to console themselves for the loss of earthly power on the advent of democracy. As quarrelsome or lawless persons would mar the felicity of the life to come, good character was supposed to begin at death, and this led indirectly to an ethical qualification for present membership in the cult. After this beginning we are not surprised to find the influence of Nietzsche and to learn that later developments including the Christian were a degradation to the superstitions and class morality of submerged and slavish strata.

On the whole the book seems to be the work of a clever pamphleteer rather than of a judicious scholar with a safe method. Seeck's aptitude is for catching at resemblances and failing to distinguish things that differ. Having expressed pagan religion in somewhat Christian terms he is keen to present Christianity in its pagan analogies, not analyzing the complex called Christianity in any given age to discover a central germinative principle which gives it its distinctive individuality. It is plain that the Messianic preaching of Jesus rapidly absorbed the practices and ideas of its converts in the empire, but using Christianity as a lump term for anything expressed by a Christian writer and making few discriminations of age and place, Seeck with careless ease presents Christianity and other cults as parallel creations of the same conditions. An absurd instance of Seeck's *religionsgeschichtliche Methode* betraying a complete ignorance of Jewish apocalyptic works may be cited. The Mithra cult and the Stoic philosophy had predicted the conflagration of the world, and the civil wars before Augustus and after Nero made this a popular foreboding. "Christianity took possession of this contemporary idea." The Jews had expected a restoration of the Jewish monarchy under a Davidic king but the catastrophe of the year 70 led the Christians to substitute for the Jewish idea a prediction of the Son of God coming on the clouds of heaven and destroying the wicked by fire.

For Seeck anything is a source and its application unlimited. The Fourth Gospel is as good as the Synoptics. An Augustinian prejudice is cited to characterize all Christians, though Justin, Clement, and Origen held an opposite view. Tertullian's disparagement of philosophy blots Alexandrian Christianity from memory. The account of Christianity produced by such methods and by the Nietzschean animus is a

mere caricature such as a modern Celsus or Lucian might write. The only religious motive operating in Christianity was fear of hell, and the virtues of Christians were not derived from their religion. The Christian view of work was like that of the Neapolitan lazzarone. Christian ethics were the ethics of slaves and beggars who hated the rich man and his culture while they extolled his almsgiving since they depended on it. Jesus and Paul were weak on the duty of chastity and the improved chastity of later times was due to the infusion of German blood. The New Testament did not dare condemn infanticide. It is solemnly argued that Christianity did not favor lying and it is conceded that such debauchees as Nero and Elagabalus were not found among the Christians.

The closing chapters on the Donatist and Arian difficulties are of more value.

FRANCIS A. CHRISTIE.

BOOKS OF MEDIEVAL AND MODERN EUROPEAN HISTORY

Französische Verfassungsgeschichte von der Mitte des Neunten Jahrhunderts bis zur Revolution. Von Dr. ROBERT HOLTZMANN, Professor an der Universität Strassburg i. E. [Handbuch der mittelalterlichen und neueren Geschichte, herausgegeben von G. von Below und F. Meinecke.] (Munich and Berlin: R. Oldenbourg. 1910. Pp. xi, 543.)

THIS volume is the ninth and the latest addition to the series, *Handbuch der mittelalterlichen und neueren Geschichte*, edited by G. von Below and F. Meinecke, professors in the University of Freiburg i. Br., the latter being also editor of the *Historische Zeitschrift*. Other volumes of the series already include: *Das häusliche Leben der Europäischen Kulturvölker vom Mittelalter bis zur zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts*, by Dr. Alwin Schultz; *Geschichte des späteren Mittelalters von 1197-1492*, by Dr. Johann Loserth; *Historische Geographie*, by Dr. Konrad Kretschmer; *Allgemeine Münzkunde und Geldgeschichte des Mittelalters und der Neueren Zeit*, by Dr. A. Luschin von Ebenreuth; *Geschichte des Europäischen Staatensystems von 1660 bis 1789*, by Dr. Max Immich; *Handelsgeschichte der Romanischen Völker des Mittelmeergebiets bis zum Ende der Kreuzzüge*, by Professor Adolf Schaube; and *Allgemeine Geschichte der Germanischen Völker bis zur Mitte des Sechsten Jahrhunderts*, by Professor Ludwig Schmidt.

In a prospectus of the series the general editors call attention to the fact that this is the day of the historical specialist, and that there is great necessity to synthesize in a comprehensive form the enormous mass of literature, especially that of a periodical character, which has appeared within the last twenty years upon the subject of medieval and modern history. How comprehensive the general plan of this series is may be perceived from the statement that it will extend to forty