

up octavos of over 300 pages. The first is a story of the Dutch Reformation, the siege of Antwerp being a prominent incident in the narrative, but it connects with Reformation times in France and in England. "Ragweed" is a Western American story, the scene of which is on the Missouri river, and tells how unlovely creatures, speaking uncouth English, were brought, by dint of divine grace worked out in human kindness, to become respectable members of society. Little touches of that practical theology, which is leavening all thoughtful minds, more or less, at the present day, appear, especially in the latter book, the burden of which is to shift from God all responsibility for the evil that is in the world. The two books are sensible, interesting, and calculated to do good.

Dr. George Adam Smith's "Historical Geography of the Holy Land," is a fine looking octavo, of near 700 pages, and six pretty fair maps. It is a dryish readable compilation from the authorities in "Ritter's Comparative Geography of Palestine," and such more recent writers as Conder, Sayce, Dawson, Ramsay, and the Palestine Exploration people. There is no original research in the book, and no finality. A little poetry and history, description of scenery, apologetic, and fencing with higher critics, varies the story of this new Palestine guide-book; but definite information is hard to find. The author thinks the Philistines were Semitic, but is not sure; thinks it safe to identify Caphtor with the island of Crete; and thinks the Hittites came from Taurus, in Asia Minor; all of which are ridiculous thoughts for any man who has studied the Bible and the monuments of the East to hold. One looks in the book for the great historical names of Bible antiquity that are linked with geographical sites, such as those of Auer, Eshcol and Mamre, the Amorites; Ephron, the Hittite; the Anakim of Kirjath Arba; Chushan Rishathaim; and finds them

not. Dr. Smith should have waited until he had gained some actual facts to add to the world's stock of knowledge, before presenting his work to a credulous public. The later history is better.

A friend has sent me Conan Doyle's "Round the Red Lamp," a series of tales chiefly of a medical character. The friend drew my special attention to the one called "A Straggler of '15," which is very pathetic, but not so much so as "A Physiologist's Wife." The whole series illustrates both the bright and the dark sides of a medical man's experience in a very felicitous manner, much in the style of "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes." All Conan Doyle's stories are pure and honorable in tendency, as are those of the lamented Robert Louis Stevenson, and of such other living writers as Crockett, Weyman, Barrie, and Ian Maclaren. It is a pleasure to know that our present day youth are surrounded by literary influences of so healthful a nature, and one so consistent with manly Christianity. Some theological teaching is not so helpful as is that which good story-tellers convey in pleasing form.

Although the Talker has almost exceeded his limits, he cannot refrain from directing attention to a handsomely printed tractate of sixteen pages, entitled, "The Office and Work of Elders," a discourse delivered in Crescent Street Church, on the occasion of an ordination of elders, Dec. 2nd, 1894, and published by request. Its author is the Rev. Principal MacVicar, D.D., LL.D., and it is an admirable setting forth of Scripture teaching as to the call, ordination, office, and character of the elder. It is marked by the Principal's usual clearness of thought, simplicity of expression, and orderly method. As an elder's manual, in brief, it would be a good thing to place in the hands of all the members of our kirk-sessions, and it would also prove instructive to private church members. Messrs. Morton, Phillips & Co. are the publishers.

*John Campbell*