

him to do right. He accepts the truth. Right-living through Jesus Christ is all he knows, but that knowledge simply and faithfully practiced is a power strong enough to reconstruct the Christian ideas of a whole community, to awaken the hypocrite and convince the infidel. There is nothing strained or overdrawn about the effects of Sam Kimper's religion. It is the natural outcome of genuine Christian living.

Margaret Deland in "Sidney" has advanced considerably beyond "John Ward Preacher." In dramatic effect, in pathos, in close study of human nature, in style and finish the later book is superior. To handle the thought in which the story finds its impulse, that life ends in death, and hence that love, which must end in sorrow, is a wrong to one's self and to others, demands a large knowledge of sorrow and of spiritual struggle. This Mrs. Deland has and she draws Major Lee, who has accepted this theory of life, with firmness and tenderness. Sidney, beautiful, self-centered, and calm, is led in a story both true and tragic from this fatalism into a large conception of what she calls the *meaning* of life. There are several scenes of marvelous power, in her experience. The accompanying characters are a most entertaining set of people, especially Mrs. Paul, with her habit of putting the worst construction on every thing and her instant recognition of cleverness equal or superior to her own, and poor little-souled Miss Sally, who weeps when her lover throws her over and yet who feels half relieved because she can go about her old ways without being called on for "emotions."

As a picture of New York colonial life from 1757 through the Revolution, "In the Valley"† is admirable. The French, Dutch, and English, of the Mohawk Valley, the adventures and exposures of the fur trader, the stately social life in New York, the failure at Quebec in 1775, the awful slaughter by the French Indians in the Valley, are portrayed accurately and yet in a flowing, easy style which shows a complete mastery of the material—a virtue which we wish writers of historical romances could be made oftener to appreciate. The language, too, has a touch of quaintness which helps the reader to transport himself into Dutch New York. As a story, "In the Valley" is not so satisfactory. The hero is tame—even for a Dutchman—and the sympathy of the reader goes to the last with the dashing young Englishman, in spite of his temper, his wine, and his Toryism.

**New Fiction.** The latest novel on the Southern question and a strong one is "Nicholas Blood, Candidate."† Mr. Henry writes from the standpoint of a Northerner whose fine theories about educating and cultivating the colored race are in the violent recoil caused by actual contact with the lowest class of the south—if not of the earth—the negro of the southern city slums, ignorant, sensual, indolent. He has portrayed their life with a fidelity to the revolting truth which fortunately his artistic sense has saved him from carrying too far. His conclusions are the result possible from existing conditions in the south, indeed they are the only result—if there were not counterbalancing forces at work, another side to the picture. Dramatically the book is much superior for considering but the one side of the Southern question. It will have the more influence, too, on its readers. It will be worth the more to the North, whose great weakness on the Southern question is in overlooking the Nicholas Blood side. The style is highly polished; in places perhaps a little too plainly Victor Hugo-esque, but not painfully so. The dialect is good, the interest sustained. The delicate suggestion of a love tale which is spun through it, is a fine relief to its dark pages.

We know of no story with larger possibilities for doing good than John Habberton's "All he Knew."‡ Its hero is a weak and vicious man whose crimes have brought him to the penitentiary. There he is taught of Christ. All he learns is that there is a Friend who will help

\* From an Old Love Letter. By Irene A. Jerome. Boston: Lee and Shepard. Price, \$1.00.

† Nicholas Blood, Candidate. By Arthur Henry. New York: Oliver Dodd, Judge Building. Price, 75 cents.

‡ All he Knew. A Story. By John Habberton. Meadville, Penn'a: Flood and Vincent. Price, \$1.00.

\* Sidney. By Margaret Deland. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company. Price, \$1.25.

† In the Valley. By Harold Frederic. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Price, \$1.50.

There is no subject for interpretation by pen or brush which so baffles the artist as the Christ. There is none which has produced more disappointing results. Mrs. Phelps Ward's "Come Forth,"\* a story of Lazarus and Christ is not an exception. It is a fresh and strong story, well written, ingenious in plot, careful in description, but the Christ is nothing more than a pure and magnetic personality, a powerful, mysterious conjurer. Like the gods in the old plays, he comes in on his elevated stage at the nick of time to save the situation. He does not bow the reader's head in worship nor hush his heart in awe and love. Lazarus, to be sure, is intended to be the central character. It is *his* story, but the Nazarene is, perforce, the all engrossing theme. He does all that is done, and it is the emphasis put on his *doing* instead of his *being* which it seems to us makes the study so inadequate. Baruch is, because of his utter unselfishness, a more impressive character than the Christ.