

popularity, and to the sense of acquaintance with the writer, which every reader of Grace S. Richmond feels goes with the reading of her books. The story is of the days when the United States entered into the War. "Red" is our old friend "Red Pepper," the unrivalled surgeon, "Black," the new minister in the suburban neighborhood in which "Red Pepper" has his home. The stormy antagonism between the two forms the central interest of the book; and the unlooked for ways in which the two were ultimately bound together in a friendship clamped with bands of steel. A delightful love story is deftly woven in. Any one who relishes a clean, wholesome, human book, with plenty of action, and photographic-like delineation of the suburbanite Americans, as they are to be found in the neighborhood of a hundred cities, will welcome Red and Black.

We are rather apt to forget the country and think about the cities, when we would know what a people are like. It is always a mistake to do so. Even in a country like England, which lives so much by its factories and its ships, the farm counts immensely. The farming population are in a very real sense the backbone of England's strength. One doesn't know England unless he knows the people of her countryside. In *The Four Roads* (McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 320 pages, \$1.50), Sheila Kaye-Smith gives us what might be called a series of photographic views of a Sussex farming village—or, to be more exact, of six types of its vigorous, passionate, though slow-moving life. "What Mr. Britling Sees It Through," does in the case of the educated, town-bred Englishman, the *Four Roads* does for the plain country folk—shows how they felt and acted when the overwhelming call and tragedy of the War came upon them, and how they were lifted by it out of the common, self-centred round of their daily life, into heroic service of king and country and the freedom of mankind. It is a story, *The Four Roads*, of very plain people, very plainly told, and by one who knows them and understands them through and through. It is in this that the book has its distinction and its special interest. One feels that he is among very real, though little known people, who speak in their broad, racy dialect, and whose loves and hates are vigorously primitive. The book is one which "stays with" the reader.

Like others of Ellen Glasgow's stories, her latest, *The Builders* (Musson Book Co., Toronto, 379 pages) is filled with love and tragedy, the tragedy in this instance being an ill assorted marriage with the results that followed from it. The scene is in Virginia and the changes which the oncoming War, and the long drawn hesitation of the United

States to enter into it, brought about in the life of the "Old Dominion," especially in that of the husband of the story.

There is much discussion of the problem of the entrance upon the War, and later in the story, of the spirit by means of which the United States can help the other nations of the world—take the leadership of them indeed, as not a few of our good neighbors appear to think their country exists to do. The atmosphere and attitude are completely American, but this sentiment, at least, sane men of all nations will praise: "Our first duty appears to be, not natural expansion, but the development of moral fibre." It is an echo of memorable lines of the American philosopher and sage, Ralph Waldo Emerson, written sixty years ago, but apropos still: Emerson's words sound more poignantly than ever after the lapse of sixty years:

"United States! the ages plead—

Present and Past in under-song—

Go put your creed into your deed,

Nor speak with double tongue.

"For sea and land don't understand,

Nor skies without a frown

See rights for which the one hand fights

By the other cloven down."

The whole story is intensely local to Virginia and to the United States; but on that account all the more vivid as enabling us the better to understand the thinking and actions of our cousins in one part of the Republic.

Barbara of Baltimore, by Katherine Haviland Taylor (George H. Doran Company, New York, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 278 pages, \$1.50 net) has for its heroine a girl of that old southern city, who wins our hearts at once, because she has learned,—or perhaps always knew by some strange, sweet intuition—the lesson that the truest happiness is found in the happiness of others. Barbara has an older sister, Alix, who is a strange contrast in her selfishness and her craving for wealth and position. But Alix, too, comes to know, the great things in life, after all, are the things that money and rank cannot give. Let it not be supposed that Barbara is of the goody-goody sort. On the contrary, she is a natural, wholesome girl, taking her full share in fun and frolic in a delightful home, the idol of her father, a doctor, who cares more for doing good than for making money, just the right kind of a daughter to her mother, and a fine chum to her younger brother and sister. The romance of Barbara as life begins, when Patrick Francis Goven Deems, a shell-shocked Irish soldier, comes into the Baltimore household to be cared for by the doctor. Barbara's romance begins then, and so do all sorts of mysterious happenings, which keep the reader on the qui vive until the very end of the story.