

## BOOK REVIEW.

SIDNEY. By MARGARET DELAND, Author of "John Ward, Preacher." Toronto: William Bryce.

Sidney, the heroine of this story, is an American girl, who has been brought up by her father to believe that God and a future life are unreasonable fictions, and is resolved, therefore, never to love or to marry with the dread prospect of eternal separation at death. The nature, however, which God has formed in all human beings, proves too strong for her sceptical theories, and in her love for a young physician, who dies soon after his marriage with her, she tells her father that she has "found God." The writer of this story will not misunderstand us when we say that it is scarcely the book which can be recommended to Young Canadians; but those older people, who take an interest in the speculative perplexities surrounding our religious life, will find in it the same kind of power which gave popularity to "John Ward, Preacher," and to "Robert Elsmere."

SEA-SIDE AND WAY-SIDE. Illustrated. By JULIA MCNAIR WRIGHT. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co.

This Series of Nature Readers for beginners in reading is not intended as a course of juvenile text-books on the study of Nature. It is rather an adaptation of common sense in the education of children—an attempt to lay before the minds of young readers the beautiful and wonderful things of Nature, clothed in the everyday language of child-life, or rather, to make use of the language used in our elementary school books to convey delightful nature studies instead of the rambling, aimless nothings which are the theme of so many weary primers. Miss Wright has succeeded in throwing a new light upon the difficult problem of how to catch the inattentive ear, how to impress the inattentive mind, and how to unite interest and instruction. We can no longer say that Fairyland rules supreme. Miss Wright has made Truth more fairy-like than Fairyland itself.

An event, most interesting in the fairyland of science, took place in London, England, a week or two ago, when an underground railway, propelled by electricity, was opened. At a depth of forty feet beneath the surface, beyond the risk of water and gas pipes, or other subterranean works, the railway crosses under the River Thames, and runs a distance of three and a quarter miles. The train is composed of the motor, or carriage with the propelling power, and three passenger carriages, which hold one hundred people. Its weight is forty tons. The carriages are seated like ours, opening from end to end, with seating accommodation along the sides, and from floor to roof measure seven feet. The tunnel is perfectly dark, but each car is fitted with four incandescent lamps, and the atmosphere is reported to be as good as above ground. Ample staircase accommodation, and water-power elevators, holding fifty people, are supplied for going up and down. Hitherto, in our Mother Country, the system of charging per mile has been sacredly kept up. It seems the fairest to all. You get a short distance for one penny, instead of our five cents charge, and as we much oftener go a short distance than a long one, the economy is evident. In this new line, however, the experiment of a uniform fare of two-pence has been tried, dispensing with the necessity of numerous clerks.



### HOW, WHEN, WHERE, AND WHY WE GOT OUR BIBLE.

When we hear from our pulpits our esteemed clergymen say that we base our faith on the person and the teachings of Jesus, that means that we believe that Jesus was actually born into this world,—as actually as you and I have been: that He did actually live on earth among men: that He was at once divine and human, possessing the powers and the perfect character of God as well as the natural feelings and desires of man: that He taught us how we ought to live, to think, to speak and act: that He taught with authority as God; that He willingly offered Himself to die in our stead for our sins: and that He went back again to God where He is still waiting to help us and plead for us.

How does it come after almost two thousand years since Jesus lived in Palestine that we may know Him quite as well as those did who saw him, and know about him quite as well as those who had the privilege of hearing him speak?

There lived, at the same time as Jesus, two men called Matthew and John. These men were the personal friends of Christ. They went where he went, and did what He did. They were his disciples, his followers. John and Matthew had two intimate friends whose names were Mark and Luke, and most naturally they told these friends all they had known of their beloved Master, and the wonderful words they had heard Him speak: until at length Mark and Luke came to know Jesus just as well as if they themselves had heard and seen Him. When Jesus had left the earth and gone back again to His Father, and was no longer near to give counsel and comfort, these four men began to recall what they remembered about His beautiful life of goodness, and His wonderful lessons. They thought over it, and talked over it, that it might appear more familiar to them. Then they wrote it all down so that they might never forget it, and that others might know and learn about it.

As this was a long time before the invention of printing, it took a long time to write a few copies of the story. It would be written on a kind of skin with a pen called a *stylus*. When we speak of the *style* of our writing now a days we recall the connection between *style* and *stylus*. Although the skin must have been much more durable than paper would have been, there are now, so far as we know, none of these ancient records still existing. I say as far as we know; for within recent years some remarkable discoveries of early writings have been made, and learned men are indulging the hope that possibly some still more ancient may be lying shut away in a dark and neglected corner of some old convent. But we possess what we call *evidence*,—proofs which pass from step to step and take us back almost to the days of John and Matthew. When the hopes of learned men are realized, as we trust they may be, the last link in the chain will be found,—the golden chain which binds us at the end of the nineteenth century by clear and unmistakable steps, to the days of our blessed Lord Himself.