

elliptical phrase; that it is a most artificial, yet accurate, exhibit of human weaknesses; that it is exceedingly difficult reading, being at once prolix in the narrative and too much abbreviated in the sentence; and that, in a word, a mere commonplace in itself, it is interesting only by reason of its style, which one hesitates, nevertheless, to designate as antiseptic. Like the late Walter Pater, but in lesser degree, the author of "The Egoist" and "Beauchamp's Career, is to remain caviare to the general reader. In the case of Mr. Meredith this is greatly to be deplored, because of the large and even predominant proportions of living human interest there is in the extensive body of his work. But Mr. Meredith deliberately and most foolishly sees fit to veil this—the supreme test of durable fiction—with a manner which at best is inviting in its poses and petty affectations. The most palpable effect of this is the unreality of a scene that is but partly disclosed, and of characters who all talk in the same way—that is to say, in a way that men and women never talk. Here are a few of Mr. Meredith's phrases: "Fair girls," he says, "are softer, woollier"—than brunes—"and when they mean to look serious overdo it by craping solemn; or they pinafore a jiggling eagerness, or boist propriety on a chubby flaten grin." When one of the characters is startled, "she jumped an illumined half—about on her chair." An editor and a women of fashion forming a friendly alliance: "The different hemi-spheres became known as one sphere to these birds of broad wing convening in the upper blue above a quartered carcass earth." When the heroine blushes, "she flushed her dark brown-red late-sunset." And so on, until the reader feels thankful—to quote Mr. Meredith's own words—to "grasp a comprehensible sentence of a muddleb rigmarole."

The following remarks by a correspondent are in keeping with ideas recently advocated in THE COURIER, which called forth some criticism: "I do not know how other men may feel, but as for me I am tired with trying to keep up with the phantasmagoric fads of religion and literature. Being a reasonably busy man, I can not always seize a fashion as it flies! A new novel appears. Society is saturated with it. It leaks into every conversation. Its colors current literature. Very probably you are back in the middle ages with Emerson and Huxley and Ruskin. You must hasten perusal of this wonderful, epoch-creating book; this book that threatens to effect the vernal equinox. You get around to it in a few months, and you are surprised to find that you are just as far behind the time as you were before. Society is chasing different air bubbles, putting up new gods, and fifty copies of Peter Ibbetson and Marcella and Robert Elsmere placidly repose upon the shelf of the public library to accumulate the affluent dust. So it is with religious fads. We used to have a fellow in our divinity school who had written something to which, he said, Isaiah couldn't hold a candle! I believe one of the students intimated to him that probably Isaiah would have held a candle to it being sure that it was lighted, too; Every now and then somebody invents or discovers a new religion that is rapidly going to supersede Christianity. Sometimes this wonderful faith is imported from Central India, where it has been in the keeping of mysterious Mahatmas for untold centuries, very probably in expectation of a profitable American market. Sometimes it is embalmed—and buried—in a ponderous literary sepulcher like Isis Unveiled or some other form of esoteric scriptures! And the astonishing thing about these imported religions is that, although they pay no tariff duty, which is a pity, they are held to be precious in proportion to their and the scarcity of their converts. When you have waded through these ponderous folios and have detected the origin of most of their subject-matter, their feverish disciples are away off to Central India in search of some new kind of Mahatmas! I would prescribe for all imported Buddhists or Brahmins, all Ibsen-

ities, all worshipers of the crabbed crudities of Walt Whitm good wholesome diet of Don Quixote.

Rev. John Snyder, a well-known liberal thinker, criticises Dr. Talmage's recent sermon against suicide intended as an answer to Ingersoll's article, a condensation of which was given in THE COURIER last week. The critic says: "Perhaps Dr. Talmage is as great a sinner in respect to what may be called the orthodox use of the Bible as any man in this Jay and generation. A recent sermon furnishes a striking case in this point. Mr. Talmage wants to preach a sermon against suicide. Of course according to the orthodox theory his sermon must be based upon a specific Bible text. The whole spirit of the Bible is opposed to self-murder. Unlike some of the other ancient peoples, the Jews were not addicted to this sad crime. Contrary to Mr. Talmage's conclusions, they were not deterred by the fear of hell, but by the fear of God. For centuries the Jews had no formulated belief in a future life. Not one of the great prophets, for instance, ever draws a single moral sanction from the doctrine of immorality. As far as we can see, their hope and fear and expectations were confined to limits of this life. And yet the Jews were probably the most moral people of antiquity. But to return to my point. Mr. Talmage can not find in the Bible a single text that denounces suicide. So he turns to the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Acts. Paul and Silas have been miraculously released from their prison bonds, and the affrighted jailer, thinking they had escaped, draws his sword to kill himself. Paul cries with a loud voice, 'Do thyself no harm. Here Mr. Talmage's text stops short. But why was the jailer to do himself no harm? Because suicide was a crime? Not a word of this. But because, as the text line shows, 'We are all here.' This reminds one of the preacher who wanted to preach against the female custom of wearing the hair high on the head, and selected for his text the last four words of the sentence, Let those upon the housetop not come down! But there are more serious charges to be brought agatnst Mr. Talmage's sermon on suicide. He casts vicious slurs upon whole classes of people who reject his crude system of theology, and who find a higher incentive to noble living than the cowardly prudence which dreads eternal punishment. He says there never has been a case of suicide where the operator was not either demented, and, therefore, irresponsible, or an infidel. And by the term infidel, he means, of course, according to orthodox fashion, everybody who rejects his theological barbarities. Again he says after Tom Paine's Age of Reason was published and widely read, there was a marked increase of self-slaughter. This is another indication of Mr. Talmage's dense and sinful ignorance of the Age of Reason. Mr. Paine was a sincere and enthusiastic believer in a future life. Mr. Talmage believes that if a suicide can be arrested on the very edge of the grave and urged to accept the merits of Christ's atonement, that no matter what crimes he may have added to self slaughter, he will be sure of immediate paradise. Mr. Paine could have put his sublime and rational faith into the beautiful words of Whittier:

I know not where his islands lift
Their froned palms in air;
I only know I can not drift
Beyond his love and care.

Which mean equal justice and equal love for saints and sinners."

Newspaper correspondents disagree as to Mr. Cleveland's disease some claiming that it is Bright's disease of the Kidneys, others insisting that it is a cancer, while a few hold out for dropsy, but the larger part of the democratic party unite in diagnosing his case as enlargement of the head.

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