

University of Louisville

ThinkIR: The University of Louisville's Institutional Repository

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

5-1921

George Meredith's ideas of religion.

Mary Ellis Duncan
University of Louisville

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.library.louisville.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Duncan, Mary Ellis, "George Meredith's ideas of religion." (1921). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. Paper 383.
<https://doi.org/10.18297/etd/383>

This Master's Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by ThinkIR: The University of Louisville's Institutional Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ThinkIR: The University of Louisville's Institutional Repository. This title appears here courtesy of the author, who has retained all other copyrights. For more information, please contact thinkir@louisville.edu.

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

GEORGE MEREDITH'S IDEAS OF RELIGION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty

Of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Of Master of Arts

Department of English

By

Mary Ellis Duncan

1921

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents.

- Chapter I. Introduction: Meredith's relation to contemporary writers; his reaction to influences of the age; his belief in realism and the necessity of cheerfulness.
- Chapter II. Popular interpretation of Meredith as a pagan; his attitude toward the Comic Spirit; definition of the Comic Spirit; examples of victims of the Comic Spirit.
- Chapter III. Meredith's belief in Christianity; his belief in prayer; his belief in immortality; his faith in the reality of spiritual life; his dislike of creeds.
- Chapter IV. Meredith's worship of Nature; his belief in our dependence upon Earth; conclusion.

CHAPTER I.

George Meredith's Ideas of Religion.

Every man is to a greater or less degree a product of the influences surrounding his life. The more commonplace minds of the race, no doubt, are chiefly affected; and occasionally we find a man or woman of so keen an intellect, so striking an individuality, that it is difficult to trace the influence of his age upon him. Rather he becomes a power in forming the opinions of the next generation, stands in advance of his own period. Of this individualistic type is George Meredith, one of the greatest of the nineteenth century writers, if not foremost among them.

A few bare facts of his life may be hastily considered in order that the work of the man may be better understood. Born in 1828 of Welsh and Irish parents and educated chiefly in Germany, he was early subjected to three distinct influences: the wit and humor of the Irish, the genuine sincerity of the Welsh, the philosophic thoughtfulness of the German; these traits are all preserved in the man and reflected in his writings. An early marriage with a brilliant woman much older than he, though causing considerable sadness for both, produced some good results in Meredith's life from the fact that it caused him to study

woman more carefully, sympathize with her completely, and thus to become one of the three greatest portrayers of womanhood in English literature, ranking in this particular with Shakespeare and Browning. One who tries to study this marriage justly will not censure either severely, for their love was blighted by the native characteristics of each, both emotional, imaginative, quick to anger, cuttingly satirical, and strained to the limit by poverty. After nine years of married life they separated, Meredith being given their one son Arthur, a five-year-old lad. Three years later Mrs. Meredith died. A second marriage much later in Meredith's life proved ideally happy, thus offering some refutation of the charge made by Meredith's unsympathetic critics that he was unable to hold the love of any one. Other conclusive proofs are offered in the numerous warm and lasting friendships he enjoyed through out his long life.

To place Meredith in the literary world more readily, we may consider some of the contemporary writers. "In 1828 when Meredith was born, Byron, Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth had done their best work, though Southey was Poet Laureate and was succeeded by Wordsworth in 1843. Tennyson and Elizabeth Barrett were just known, and Browning had not printed Pauline. Among essayists and reviewers, Hazlett and Lamb were near the end of their lives; Hunt,

De Quincy, and Landor were in mid-career; Macaulay had contributed his first vigorous articles to the Edinburgh Review, Carlyle was at the close of his period of extreme admiration for things German, and Ruskin was a boy of ten. Scott was the acknowledged leading novelist, though the Waverly series was nearly complete. Thomas Love Peacock, later Meredith's father-in-law, was very popular as the author of several satirical tales of English life; Susan Ferrier was between Inheritance and Destiny, and Maria Edgeworth between Ormond and Helen. Disraeli had just published Vivian Gray. Bulwer, not yet raised to the peerage, was in the period of his wild and wicked heroes; and G.P.R. James, foolishly encouraged by Scott, was at work upon Richelieu.

"Between 1829 and 1859, that is during the thirty years which lay between Meredith's birth and the appearance of his first novel, important changes took place in literary England. Tennyson steadily forged ahead until he succeeded Wordsworth as Poet Laureate in 1850; by publishing In Memoriam in the same year he placed his fame upon no doubtful foundation. Browning was making his way slowly; his wife was regarded as the greater poet of the two. Arnold was being severely criticised for trying to write English poetry by Greek methods. Rosetti's verses awaited their resurrection from the grave of his wife, and

Swinburne was probably no more than beginning to think about those naughty Poems and Ballads, which eventually troubled the sentimental propriety of England.

"George Eliot at the close of the period astonished herself no less than the world by the success with which she met in the writing, at the suggestion of George Henry Lewes, of the three stories now collected under the title, Scenes of Clerical Life. Wilkie Collins set about the composition of The Woman in White, an attractive example of a story told for the story's sake.

"Two men mentioned in the same breath with Scott were Dickens and Thackeray. They began their literary work soon after the year of Meredith's birth, and, publishing writings with regularity, had completed nearly all their important novels when The Ordeal of Richard Feverel appeared in 1859.

"Among prose writers other than novelists, Carlyle and Ruskin were preaching the nobility of labor and fulminating against cant and sham. Macaulay continued his brilliant essays and began his no less brilliant history. The Tractarian Movement ran its course with its remarkable display of fine rhetoric, enthusiastic zeal, and deep religious feeling. The opposing leaders, Pusey and Newman, both equally sincere, shook the English church to its foundations; while Gladstone, though not in the midst of the

conflict, hovered with much apprehension upon the outskirts of the battlefield. George Eliot hardly helped to simplify matters by translating German inquiries into the authenticity of Christianity, and the work of Darwin and Spencer in natural science and in philosophy, not only added to the confusion, but forced thinking men to give up long accepted doctrines and to reformulate many sacred beliefs.

"In the same ^{year} with Richard Feverel came Dicken's Tale of Two Cities, Thackeray's The Virginians, Trollope's Bertram, Reade's Love Me Little, Love Me Long, Fitzgerald's translation of the Rubaiyat, Darwin's Origin of the Species, and Mill's Essay on Liberty. Moreover the deaths of Leigh Hunt, Macaulay, and De Quincey occurred in the same year." (Bailey, E.J., The Novels of George Meredith, p. 17-20)

Of the thinkers of the age and their influence on Meredith, we find only a few with any really traceable effects. He sympathizes with Carlyle, Ruskin, and Mill, in their efforts to promote fair dealing for the poorer classes, and shows in his novels his realization of the unfavorable conditions. He is in close harmony with the thinkers opposed to creeds and formality in religion, but has at all times a wholesome respect for any genuine belief and religious faith, be it Catholic or Protestant, though he allows the satirical and humorous Comic Spirit to play unmercifully on any kind of insincerity. He shares the spirit of realism,

but never loses faith in the real good existing in the world or takes the tragic view that Hardy and George Eliot do. Perhaps his beliefs in realism and cheerfulness can be best understood by seeing his opinions expressed through letters. In a letter to Lady Ulrica Duncombe (Letters of George Meredith, V.II, p. 518) he states:

"You have asked concerning character; you have been reading Biography. We cannot come to the right judgment in Biography unless we are grounded in History. It is knowledge of the world for the knowing of men. Question the character whether he worked in humanity's mixed motives for great ends on the whole; or whether he inclined to be merely adroit, a juggler, for his purposes. Many of the famous are only clever interpreters of the popular wishes. Real greatness must be based on morality. These platitudes are worth keeping in mind. Mind, while reading severely, may be indulgent unless baseness is shown. There is a philosophy of life for it to embrace, and that means the reverse of cynicism, to be tolerant of our human constitution. We have to know that we know ourselves. Those who tell us we do not cannot have meditated on the word Conscience. In truth, so well do we know ourselves that there is a general resolve to know some one else instead. We set up an ideal of the cherished object, we try our friends and the world by the standard we have raised

within, supported by pride, obscured by the passions. But if we determine to know ourselves, we see that it has been open to us all along, that in fact we did but would not know, from having such an adoration of the ideal creature erected and painted by us. It follows that having come to this knowledge we have the greater charity with our fellows - especially with the poor fellow - the most exposed to our inspection. For this reason, I preach for the mind's acceptance of Reality in all its forms; for so we come to benevolence and to a cheerful resignation. There is no other road to wisdom."

In a letter to Wilfred Meynell (Letters, V.II, p. 513) he says in regard to the necessity for cheerfulness: "For me I drag on, counting more years and not knowing why. I have to lean on an arm when I would walk, and I am humiliated by requiring at times a repetition of sentences. This is my state of old age. But my religion of life is always to be cheerful."

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley (Letters, V.II, p. 533) he writes: "I can imagine I shall retain my laugh in Death's ear, for that is what our Maker prizes in men."

To his brother-in-law, Edward Vulliany (Letters, V.II, p. 512) in writing a letter of sympathy after the death of Vulliany's wife, he says: "She would say, 'Keep good cheer as much as you can.' For that good religion

she spread about her always."

These letters expressing Meredith's views convince us that though he upholds the spirit of Realism, he holds to the faith that at least fifty-one per cent of the world is good, despite the evil every one must meet.

CHAPTER II.

Chapter II.

When we begin to consider Meredith's ideas of religion, we find him frequently interpreted as a Pagan. This may be more readily understood when we realize that in many of Meredith's most popular books the Comic Spirit is given so much attention that the occasional reader may imagine the Pagan gods to have all Meredith's mind, and heart and soul. He has written an Essay on Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit in which his attitude is fully explained: "If you believe that our civilization is founded in common sense (and it is the first condition of sanity to believe it), you will when contemplating men, discern a Spirit overhead; not more heavenly than the light flashed upward from a glassy surface, but luminous and watchful; never shooting beyond them, nor lagging in the rear; so closely attached to them that it may be taken for a slavish reflex until its features are studied. It has the sage's brows, and the sunny malice of a faun lurks at the corner of the half-closed lips drawn in an idle wariness of half-tension. That slim feasting smile, shaped like the long-bow, was once a big round satyr's laugh, that flung up the brows like a fortress lifted by gunpowder. The laugh will come again, but it will be of the order of the smile, finely tempered, showing sunlight

of the mind, mental richness rather than noisy enormity. Its common aspect is one of unsolicitous observation, as if surveying a full field and having leisure to dart on its chosen morsels, without any fluttering eagerness. Men's future upon earth does not attract it; their honesty and shapeliness in the present does, and whenever they wax out of proportion, overblown, affected, pretentious, bombastical, hypocritical, pedantic, fantastically delicate; whenever it sees them self-deceived or hood-winked, given to run riot in idolatries, drifting into vanities, congregating in absurdities, planning short-sightedly, plotting dementedly; whenever they are at variance with their professions, and violate the unwritten but perceptible laws binding them in consideration one to another; whenever they offend sound reason, fair justice; are false in humility or mined with conceit, individually or in the bulk -- the Spirit overhead will look humanely malign and cast an oblique light on them, followed by volleys of silvery laughter. That is the Comic Spirit." (Essay on Comedy and Uses of the Comic Spirit, p. 82-84)

On Page 7 of the same essay he tells us, "We shall find ourselves about where the Comic Spirit would place us if we stand at middle distance between the inveterate opponents and the drum and fife supporters of Comedy."

On Page 21: "To be an exalted variety is to come under the calm curious eye of the Comic Spirit and be

probed for what you are."

On Page 54: "There will never be a civilization where Comedy is not possible, and that comes of some degree of social equality of the sexes."

On Page 72 he distinguishes the Comic Spirit from other forms of humor. "You may estimate your capacity for Comic perception by being able to detect the ridicule of them you love without loving them less; and more by being able to see yourself somewhat ridiculous in dear eyes and accepting the correction their image of you proposes.

"Each one of an affectionate couple may be willing as we say, to die for the other, yet unwilling to utter the agreeable word at the right moment; but if the wits were sufficiently quick for them to perceive that they are in a comic situation, as affectionate couples must be when they quarrel, they would not wait for the moon, or the almanac, or a Divine, to bring back the flood tide of tender feelings that they should join hands and lips.

"If you detect the ridicule and your kindness is chilled by it, you are slipping into the grasp of Satire.

"If instead of falling foul of the ridiculous person with a satiric rod, to make him writhe and shriek aloud, you prefer to sting him under a semi-caress, by which he shall in his anguish be rendered dubious whether indeed anything has hurt him, you are an engine of Irony.

"If you laugh all around him, tumble him, roll him about, deal him a smack, and drop a tear on him, own his likeness to you and yours to your neighbor, spare him as little as you shun, pity him as much as you expose, it is a spirit of Humour that is moving you."

"The Comic, which is the perceptive, is the governing spirit, awakening and giving aim to these powers of laughter, but it is not to be confounded with them; it enfolds a thinner form of them, differing from satire in not sharply driving into the quivering sensibilities, and from humour in not comforting them and tucking them up or indicating a broader than the range of this bustling world to them."

With this definition of the Comic Spirit before us, we may interpret the action of the Spirit in the characters of Meredith's novels. Perhaps none is more outstanding a victim of the Comic Spirit than Sir Willoughby Patterne, the Egoist. One realizes Meredith's real joy in seeing the conceited young man troubled by the imps. After being rejected by Clara Middleton, Sir Willoughby hastens to his life-long admirer, Laetitia Dale, only to find that she has no longer any admiration or love for him, since she too has awakened to his weaknesses.

"Sir Willoughby pursued Laetitia with solicitations to espouse him, until the inveteracy of his wooing

wore the aspect of the life-long love he raved of aroused to a state of mania. He appeared, he departed, he returned; and all the while his imps were about him and upon him, riding him, prompting, driving, inspiring him with outrageous pathos, an eloquence to move any one but the dead, which its object seemed to be in her torpid attention. He heard them, he talked to them, caressed them, he flung them off and ran from them, and stood vanquished for them to mount him again and swarm on him. There are men thus imp-haunted. Men, who setting their mind upon an object must have it, breed imps." (The Egoist, p. 512)

In Richard Feverel Meredith uses Adrian Harley as the Pagan type who enjoys the action of the Comic Muse. He sums up the character of Adrian admirably: "Adrian was an epicurean, one which Epicurus would have scourged out of his garden certainly; an epicurean of our modern notions. To satisfy his appetites without rashly staking his character was the wise youth's problem for life. He had no intimate except Gibbon and Horace, and the society of these fine aristocrats of literature helped him to accept humanity as it had been and was; a supreme ironic procession with laughter of gods in the background. Why not laughter of mortals also? Adrian had his laugh in his comfortable corner. He possessed peculiar qualities of a heathen God. He was a disposer of men; he was polished, luxurious, and happy -- at their cost. He lived in eminent

self content as one lying on soft cloud, lapt in sunshine. No Jove, no Apollo cast eye upon the maids of earth with cooler fire of selection or pursued them to the covert with more sacred impunity. And he enjoyed his reputation for virtue as something additional. Stolen fruits are said to be sweet; undeserved rewards are exquisite."

(The Ordeal of Richard Feverel, p. 7.)

Whenever a character attempts to pose for that which he is not, he comes under the calm curious eye of the Comic Spirit. The Misses Polk and Wilfred in Sandra Belloni, the Countess de Saldar and Evan in Evan Harrington, at times Sir Austin and Richard in The Ordeal of Richard Feverel, Victor Radnor in One of Our Conquerors, Sir Willoughby Patterne in The Egoist, may serve as some of the best examples of victims of the Comic Spirit. We feel that Meredith is getting more pleasure than any one in seeing these people so completely deceived in themselves, but in a careful analysis of his views, we cannot believe him a worshipper at the shrine of the god of comedy any more than one of us who appreciates the humor of its action should be deemed a Pagan follower. A few chapters will prove interesting for one caring to trace the Comic Spirit further. In The Egoist, Chapter XXXIX, In the Heart of an Egoist, and in Evan Harrington, Chapter XXII, In Which the Daughters of the Great Mel Have to Digest Him at Dinner, are excellent

types of Meredith's writing emphasizing this quality.

The Comic Spirit is allowed to play upon any insincerity in religion, but one must not interpret Meredith as an opponent of religious faiths for that reason. In Evan Harrington (p. 201) the Countess de Saldar states her beliefs: "Any means that Providence may designate, I would employ. * * We must not pray for vengeance. It is sinful. Providence will inflict that. Always know that Providence is quite sure to. It comforts exceedingly. * * Catholics tell you that what you do in a good cause is redeemable, if not exactly right. And you know the Catholic is the oldest Religion of the two. I would listen to the Pope, staunch Protestant as I am, in preference to King Henry VIII. Though as a woman, I bear him no rancour, for his wives were - fools, point blank. No man was ever so manageable."

Meredith, in speaking of the Countess, assures us (p. 205): "She calls up rival forms of faith that she may show the Protestant its little shortcomings, and that it is slightly in debt to her (like Providence) for her constancy, notwithstanding. The Protestant, you see, does not confess, and she has to absolve herself and must be doing it internally while she is directing outer matter."

It is interesting to compare these two passages with two that occur later in the book. On Page 396: "Would

any Protestant clergyman administer comfort to her? Could he, might he do so? He might listen and quote texts, but he would demand the harsh rude English for everything; And the Countess's confessional thoughts were all innuendoish, aerial, too delicate to live in our shameless tongue. Confession by implication and absolution; she could know this to be what she wished for and yet not think of it. She could see a haven of peace in that picture of the little brown box with the sleekly reverend figure bending his ear to the kneeling Beauty outside, thrice ravishing as she half lifts the veil of her sins - and her visage! Yet she started alarmed to hear it whispered that the fair penitent was the Countess de Saldar; urgently she prayed that no disgraceful brother might ever drive her to that. 'Never let it be a Catholic priest!' she almost fashioned her petition into words."

On Page 471, an account is given of the Countess's letter to her sister: "Evan will never wash out the trade stain on him until he comes over to the Church of Rome. While he continues a Protestant, to me he is a tailor. See how your Loney has given up the world and its vanities. The Church hath need of Me! If only for the peace it hath given me on one point, I am eternally bound to serve it.

"P.S. I am persuaded of this: that it is utterly impossible for a man to be a true gentleman who is not of

the true Church. Love is made to me, dear, for Catholics are human. The other day it was a question whether a lady or gentleman should be compromised. It required the grossest fib. The gentleman did not hesitate. And why? The priest was handy. * * This shows that your religion precludes any possibility of the being the real gentleman, and I know the thing."

In Vittoria, (Chapter XXXII, p. 348), we find another example of Meredith's opinion of the priesthood in which the Comic Spirit is not suppressed: "A village priest, a sleek gentle creature who shook his head to earth when he hoped and filled his nostrils with snuff when he desponded, gave them occasional companionship under the title of consolation.

"He wished the Austrians to be beaten, remarking, however, that they were good Catholics, most fervent Catholics. As the Lord decided, so it would end. 'Oh delicious creed,' Laura broke out. 'Oh dear and sweet doctrine! that results and developments in a world where there is more evil than good are approved by heaven.' She twisted the mild man in supple steel of her irony so tenderly that Vittoria marvelled to hear her speak of him in abhorrence when they quitted the village. 'Not to be born a woman, and voluntarily to be a woman!' ejaculated Laura. 'How many, how many are we to deduct from the male

population of Italy? Cross in hand, he should be at the head of our arms, not whimpering in a corner for white bread. Wretch, he makes the marrow in my bones rage at him!

"Why had she been so gentle with him?

"'Because, my dear, when I loathe a thing, I never care to exhaust my detestation before I can strike it!' said the true Italian."

Though Meredith in these passages assumes the fun-making, laughing attitude toward the use of the Catholic church as a cloak, he does not imply a thought against the sincere practice of the teachings nor should he be considered disrespectful. The chief reason, I believe for Meredith's being regarded as a Pagan is that he does not set himself the task of reforming the world or judging humanity, but takes frequently the philosophic view of life, interests himself in honesty and sham, right thinking and careless thought, truth and falsity, and at no time loses his sympathy with humanity, condemns the sinner relentlessly, or pretends to a piety which he cannot feel. The real man, however, goes far deeper into the interpretation of life than these passages imply.

Chapter III.

Chapter III.

One of the most reliable sources for the study of a man's true religious beliefs is his correspondence with close friends. He is then wholly freed from the obligations assumed in speaking in character and expresses his thoughts unhampered. The earliest expression of Meredith's religious beliefs I have been able to find is in a letter written to R.M.Hill from Neuwied when Meredith was sixteen. (Letters of George Meredith Collected by His Son, V.I; Letter I). "True fellowship is not to be had without Christianity; not the name but the practice of it. I wish you the greatest of all things, 'God's blessing,' which comprehends all I could or would otherwise say."

In a letter to one of his best friends, Captain Maxse, he states: "You must bear in mind that Christianity will always be one of the great chapters in the History of Humanity; that it fought down brutishness, that it has been the mother of our civilization; that it is tender to the poor, maternal to the suffering, and has supplied for most, still supplies for many, nourishment that in a certain state of the intelligence is instinctively demanded. St. Bernard checked Abelard, it is true. But he also stood against the French Barons, rebuked them and controlled them. The Church was then a Light. Since it did such a

service to men, men, I think, should not stand out against it without provocation. You speak, my dear Fred, of the deepest questions of life. They are to be thought over very long and very carefully before they are fought over. I cannot think that men's minds are strong enough or their sense of virtue secure enough to escape from the tutelage of superstition in one form or another just yet. From the Pagan divinity to the Christian, I see an advanced conception, and the nearer we get to an abstract Deity - i.e. the more and more abstract, the nearer are men to a comprehension of the principles, morality, virtue, etc., than which we require nothing further to govern us." (Letters, p. 170)

In a letter to his son, Arthur, written seven years later, he says: "What you say of our religion is what thoughtful men feel; and that you at the same time can recognize its moral value is matter of rejoicing to me. The Christian teaching is sound and good; the ecclesiastical dogma is an instance of the poverty of humanity's mind, hitherto, and has often in its hideous claws and fangs shown whence we draw our descent. Don't think that the obscenities mentioned in the Bible do harm to children. The Bible is outspoken upon facts and rightly. It is because the world is pruriently and stupidly shamefaced that it cannot come in contact with the Bible without

convulsions. I agree with Frommen that the book should be read out, for Society is a wanton hypocrite, and I would accommodate her in nothing; though, for the principle of Society, I hold that men should be ready to lay down their lives. Belief in religion has done and does this good to the young; it floats them through the perilous sensual period when the animal appetites most need control and transmutation. If you have not the belief, set yourself to love virtue by understanding; that it is your best guide both as to what is due to others and what if for your personal good. If your mind honestly rejects it, you must call on your mind to supply its place from your own resources. Otherwise you will have only half done your work, and that is always mischievous. Pray attend to my words on this subject. You know how Socrates loved Truth. Virtue and Truth are one. Look for the truth in everything, and follow it, and you will then be living justly before God. Let nothing flout your sense of a Supreme Being, and be certain that your understanding wavers whenever you chance to doubt that he leads to good. We grow to good as surely as the plant grows to the light. The school has only to look through history for a scientific assurance of it. And do not lose the habit of praying to the unseen Divinity. Prayer for worldly goods is worse than fruitless, but prayer for strength of soul

is that passion of the soul which catches the gift it seeks." (Letters, p. 236-237).

This idea of prayer is frequently expressed in Meredith. In a letter to Captain Maxse we find: "I certainly think that prayer is good for children. It is good even after the period when blind reverence ceases to be fruitful,- it is good for men. It is at once an acknowledgment of some higher power; it rouses up and cleanses the nature, and searches us through to find what we are. Only the praying for gifts and thanking for gifts is really damnable. It's like treating the Lord as an old uncle." (Letters, p. 176).

In the poem, The Empty Purse, Meredith again advocates prayer:

"If courage should falter, 'tis wholesome to kneel.
Remember that well, for the secret with some,
Who pray for no gift, but have cleansing in prayer,
And free from impurities, tower-like stand."

(Poems, p. 413)

In the novels also we find evidence of Meredith's respect for prayer and belief. In Beauchamp's Career (p. 267) is the passage: "We reverence the Master in his teachings; we behold the limits of Him in His creeds, and that is not His work.

"He who has the fountain of prayer in him will not complain of hazards. Prayer in the recognition of laws; the soul's exercise and source of strength; its

thread of conjunction with them. Prayer for an object is the cajolery of an idol, the resource of superstition. * * Cast forth thy soul in prayer, you meet the effluence of the outer truth; you join with the creative elements giving breath to you."

The Ordeal of Richard Feverel, (p. 75):

"The boy prayed with his father morning and night.

"'How is it, sir,' he said one night, 'I can't get Tom Bakewell to pray?'

"'Does he refuse?' Sir Austin asked.

"'He seems to be ashamed to,' Richard replied.

'He wants to know what is the good? and I don't know what to tell him.'

"'I am afraid it has gone too far with him,' said Sir Austin, 'and until he has had some deep sorrows, he will not find the divine want of Prayer. * * Tell him, my son, should he ever be brought to ask how he may know the efficacy of Prayer and that his prayer will be answered, tell him (he quoted from the Pilgrim's Scrip) "Who rises from Prayer a better man, his prayer is answered."'"

Other thoughts on prayer are expressed in the letters and novels. In another letter to Captain Maxse is this: "The title 'Father' really does not suggest the aspect of a man to a child's imagination if you associate it with prayer to an Unseen One. * * I would not say

'God' but 'Father of All Good'. The title 'God' is bestowed by a child (in obedience to the inquiries he has made) on him who rolls the thunder and sends the currants that form the pudding. He may always retain this notion. But the 'Father of All Good' soon grows to mean the utmost in the regulated mind of a child. I am afraid I can't see how a child is to pray ^{to} et Jesus Christ as Man; but one may teach him to pray to be likened to Him as when He walked on earth." (Letters, p. 187).

In Sandra Belloni Georgiana is urging Emilia against seeing her faithless lover, Wilfred: "If he is to be your husband, unburden your heart at once. Otherwise, why? why? You are but working up a scene provoking needless excesses; you are storing misery in retrospect or wretchedness to be endured. Had you the habit of prayer! By degrees it will give you the thirst for purity, and that makes you a fountain of prayer, in whom these blind deceits cannot hide." * * *

"'You pray to heaven,' said Emilia, and then faltered and blushed. * * 'You pray, and you wish to be seen as you are, do you not? You do. Well, if you knew what love is, you would see it is the same.'" (Chap. XLIX, p. 414). In the same book:

"Then she went to her bedroom and knelt and prayed her Savior's pardon for loving a human thing (her

mother) too well. But if the rays of her mind were dimmed, her heart beat too forcibly for this complacent self-deceit. 'No, not too well! I cannot love him too well. I am selfish. When I say that, it is myself I am loving. To love him thrice as dearly as I do would bring me nearer to God. Love, I mean, not idolatry, - another form of selfishness.' She prayed to be guided out of the path of snares.

"Can you pray? Can you put away all props of self. This is true worship unto whatsoever Power you kneel."

"This passage out of a favorite book of sentences had virtue to help her now in putting away the 'props of self'. It helped her for the time. She could not foresee the contest that was commencing for her.

"Love that shrieks at a mortal wound and bleeds humanly, what is he but a Pagan God, with the passions of a Pagan God?"

"'Yes,' thought Georgiana, meditating, 'as different from the Christian love as a brute from a man!'"
(Sandra Belloni, Chap. XXVIII, p. 226)

Another passage, from Vittoria, shows the natural recourse to prayer. In this scene Vittoria has been nursing her devoted friend Merthyr Pourys: "The sweetness of helping him and of making his breathing pleasant to him, closed much of the world which lay beyond her windows to her

thoughts, and surprised her with an unknown emotion, so strange to her that when it first swept her veins, she had the fancy of her having been touched by a supernatural hand, and heard a flying accord of instruments. She was praying before she knew what prayer was. A crucifix hung over Merthyr's head. She had looked on it many times, and looked on it still without seeing more than the old sorrow. In the night it was dim. She found herself trying to read the features of the thorn-crowned Head in the solitary night. She and it were alone with a life that was faint above the engulfing darkness. She prayed for the life, and trembled and shed tears and would have checked them; they seemed to be bearing away her little remaining strength." (Vittoria, Chap. XXXV, p. 382).

With regard to Meredith's views on Christianity as expressed otherwise than in his faith in prayer, the definite examples are few. His ideas are expressed in his admiration of the characters who work among the poor and practice the doctrine, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Austin Wentworth in Richard Feverel, old Mr. Woodseer, a cobbler and Methodist preacher and the Countess of Fleetwood, in The Amazing Marriage are tenderly treated, and we can feel assured that Meredith loved and honored them for their deeds. Everywhere kindness and consideration for humanity are treated with sympathy and understanding, while pretense of nobility and lack of practice of noble traits

are given their full share of scorn - delicately handled, truly, but the feeling is surely there. In One of Our Conquerors (p. 275) Nesta Radnor expresses her views definitely: "Women should go among their unhappier sisters. At the worst they are sisters. I am sure that fallen cannot mean-- Christ shows it does not. He changes the tone of Scripture. The women who are made outcasts, must be hopeless and go to utter ruin. We should, if we pretend to be better, step between them and that. There cannot be any goodness unless it is a practised goodness. Otherwise it is no more than paint on canvas."

In studying the question from the negative side, we find Meredith's scorn for those who do not practice Christ's teaching though they profess Christianity. Nevil Beauchamp thus addresses his wife: "'Jennie Beauchamp, they're not men; they're churchmen. My experience of the priest in our country is that he has abandoned his dead against the only cause that can justify and keep up a Church; the cause of the poor-- the people. He's a creature of the moneyed class. I look on him as a pretender. I go through his forms to save my wife from annoyance -- but there's the end of it; and if ever I am helpless, unable to resist him, I rely on your word not to let him intrude; he's to have nothing to do with the burial of me. He's against the cause of the people. When he's a Christian

instead of a Churchman, then may my example not be followed.'" (Beauchamp's Career, p. 519).

In this same book (p. 141) this passage also occurs: "'He calls the Protestant clergy the social police of the middle class. These are the things he lets fly. I've heard that man say that the Church stands to show the passion of the human race for the drama.'"

Meredith's other beliefs on the phases of Christianity are not so frequently expressed as his belief in prayer, but some fairly conclusive examples may be obtained from his writings. That he believes in immortality of the soul is evidenced by these examples. A letter to Mrs. Frederick Jones after the death of her husband: "He was one of the few true men I have known. And my friend, these men live on in us. And more, they are the higher work of Nature which she will not let pass away. They have the eternal in them. I do not look on death as a victory over us. Death and life are neighbors, each the cause of the other, and the task for us, under stress of deprivation, is to take our loved ones into the mind and commune with them spirit to spirit - so they will be wedded to us faster, closer about us than when we had the voices and eyes." (Letters, v.2, p. 424).

In a letter to Edmund Gosse: "I have looked through the black door of recent years, and though I could

not then have taken consolation from any phrases in my ear, I should have reflected, and perhaps have got some strength, if one had told me that it is only the senses that are hurt by a facing of death or the wrestle with him for our beloved. What we have of better and above then comes out of it the nobler. I remember reading a sonnet of yours on a dream of the Loss. It spoke the anguish well. But our final thought shall be that we have souls to master pain and fear. Death, the visible feeder of life, should be our familiar. I have him on my left hand and am not inconveniently at home with him. To feel this is to be near upon touch of the key of wisdom, but for the wisest of reasons, it is only good in the white heat of our trial to have it in the grasp."

(Letters, V. 2, p. 411).

In three letters to John Morley, written during his wife's illness and after her death, the same general ideas of the reality of spiritual life and immortality are expressed. "Happily for me I have learnt to live much in the spirit and see brightness on the other side of life, otherwise this running of my poor doe with the inextricable arrow in her flanks would pull me down too. As it is, I sink at times. I need all my strength to stand the buffets of the harsh facts of existence. I wish it were I to be the traveller instead. I have long been ready for the start, can think prospectingly of the lying in earth.

She has no thought but of this light - and would cry to it like a Greek victim under the knife." (Letters, V. 2, p. 369).

"This place of withered recollections, i^s like an old life to be lived again without sunshine. I cross and recross it. Sharp spikes where flowers were. Death is death as you say, but I get to her by consulting her thoughts and wishes - and so she lives in me. This, if one has the strength of soul, brings a spirit to us. I feel the blow as I get more distant from it. While she lingered, I could not hope for it to last, and now I could crave any of the latest signs of her breathing - a weakness of my flesh. When the mind shall be steadier, I shall have her calmly present, past all tears." (Letters, V. 2, p.373).

"I am still at my questions with death, and the many pictures of my dear soul's months of anguish. When the time was, and even shortly after, I was in arms, and had at least the practical philosophy given to us face to face with our enemy. Now I have sunk, am haunted. It causes me to write of her, which scorches the hand. I have need of all my powers. The thought often uppermost is in amazement at the importance we attach to our hold of sensation. So much grander, vaster, seems her realm of silence. She is in earth, our mother, and I shall soon follow. And in truth the doing of good service is the right use of this

machine." (Letters, V. 2, p. 376).

He writes also a letter to Mrs. Christopher Wilson: "I believe in Spirit, and I have her with me here, though at present I cannot get to calm of thought; all the scenes of her long endurance and the days of peace before it rise up. I am wretched when I quit this neighborhood despite the misery of the associations. They are my cup." (Letters, V. 2, p. 373).

In a letter to the Countess of Lytton Meredith writes: "There is no consolation for a weeping heart. Only the mind can help it when the showers have passed. I might be of use in talking to you. As it is, I do not know how far you have advanced in the comprehension of Life. I can but pray that you may be strengthened to bear what blows befall you, and ask for fortitude. This is the lesson for the young, that whatever the heart clings to lays it open to grief, of necessity, in such a world as ours; and whatever the soul embraces gives peace and is permanent. But that comes to us after many battles or only to the strong mind which does not require them for enlightenment." (Letters, V. 2, p. 571).

To Mrs. J. B. Gilman he writes: "If a man's work is to be of value, the best of him must be in it. I have always written with the perception that there is no life but of the spirit; that the concrete is really the

shadowy; yet that the way to spiritual life lies in the complete unfolding of the creature, not in the nipping of his passions. An outrage to Nature helps to extinguish his light. To the flourishing of the spirit, then, through the healthy exercise of the senses. These are simple truisms. But of such are the borderways of the path of wisdom." (Letters, V. 2, p. 409).

In the novels these passages occur: (The Ordeal Of Richard Feverel, p. 35): "In Loburne, Austin Wentworth had the reputation of the poor man's friend; a title he earned more largely ere he went to that reward God alone can give to that supreme virtue." (Diana of the Crossways, p. 189, Scene in which Diana and Dacier are discussing the death of Lord Danninborough.): "'We never see peace but in the features of the dead. Will you look? They are beautiful. They have a heavenly sweetness.'

"The desire to look was evidently recurrent with her. Dacier rose. Their eyes fell together on the dead man as thoughtfully as Death allows to the creature of sensation.

"'And after?' he said in low tones.

"'I trust to my Maker,' she replied. * * * (p. 192): "'We think it a desert, a blank, whither he has gone, because we will strain to see in the dark, and nothing can come of that but the bursting of the eyeballs.'

"Dacier assented; 'There's no use in peering beyond the limits.'

"'No,' said she, 'the effect is like explaining things to a dull head - the finishing stroke to the understanding. Better continue to brood. We get to some unravelment if we are left to our own efforts. I quarrel with no priest of any denomination. That they should quarrel among themselves is comprehensible in their wisdom, for each has the specific.. But they show us their way of solving the great problem, and we ought to thank them, though one or the other abominate us. You are advised to talk to Lady Dunstane on these themes. She is perpetually in the anti-chamber of death, and her soul is perennially sunshine.'"

In Lord Ormont and His Aminta, (p. 217) Meredith speaks while Matthew **Weyburn** stands at the bier of his mother: "Prayer is power within us to communicate with the desired beyond our thirsts. The goodness of the dear good mother gone was in him for assurance of a breast of goodness to receive her, whatever the nature of the eternal secret may be. The good life gone lives on in the mind; the bad has but a life in the body, and that not lasting - it extends, dispreads, it worms away, it perishes. Need we more to bid the mind perceive through obstructive flesh the God who reigns, a devil vanquished?"

"Be certain that it is the pure mind we set to

perceive. The God discerned in thought is another than he of the senses. * * We do not get to any heaven by renouncing the mother we spring from; and when there is an eternal secret for us, it is best to believe that Earth knows, to keep near her, even in our utmost aspirations."

In Rhoda Fleming (p. 125) Meredith speaks of Edward thus: "He closed as it were a black volume, and opened a new and a bright one. Young men easily fancy that they can do this, and that when the black volume is shut, the tide is stopped. Saying 'I was a fool', they believe they have put an end to foolishness. What father teaches them that a human act once set in motion flows on for ever to the great account. Our deathlessness is in what we do, not in what we are. Comfortable Youth thinks otherwise."

- Perhaps a condensed statement of Meredith's views on the reality of spiritual life and faith in the future is nowhere more definite than in the poem The Question Whither:

I

"When we have thrown off this old suit
 So much in need of mending,
 To sink among the naked mute,
 Is that, think you, our ending?
 We follow many, more we lead
 And you who sadly turf us,
 Believe not that all living seed
 Must flower above the surface.

II

"Sensation is a gracious gift,
 But were it cramped to station,
 The prayer to have it cast adrift,
 Would spout from all sensation.
 Enough if we have winked to sun
 Have sped the plough a season;
 There is a soul for labour done,
 Endureth fixed as reason.

III

"Then let our trust be firm in Good,
 Though we be of the fasting;
 Our questions are a mortal brood,
 Our work is everlasting.
 We children of Beneficence
 Are in its being sharers;
 And whither vainer sounds than whence,
 For word with such wayfarers."

Meredith's dislike of conventions in form and religious belief are evidenced in several passages. In Lord Ormont and His Aminta (p. 56) Lord Ormont's sister speaks to Matthew Weyburn of him: "Lord Ormont was never one of the wolves in a hood. Whatever you hear of him, you may be sure he laid no trap. He's just the opposite to a hypocrite; so hypocrites hate him. I've heard them called high priests of decency. Then we choose to be indecent and honest, if there's a God to worship. Fear, they're in the habit of saying - we are to fear God. A man here, a Reverend Hampton - Evey, you'll hear him harp on 'fear God!' Hypocrites may: honest sinners have no fear. And see the cause: they don't deceive themselves - that is why. Do you think we can love what we fear? They love God, or they disbelieve. And if

they believe in Him, they know they can't conceal anything from Him. Honesty means piety; we can't be one without the other. And here are people - parsons - who talk of dying as going into the presence of our Maker - as if He had been all the while outside the world He created. These parsons, I told the Rev. Hampton-Evey here make infidels - They make a puzzle of their God. I'm for a rational Deity. They preach up a supernatural eccentric. I don't say all: I've heard good sermons, and met sound-headed clergymen.

* * * But now see, all these parsons and judges and mobcaps insist upon conformity. A man with common manly courage comes before them, and he's cast in penalties. Yet we know from history, in England, France, Germany, that the time of nonconformity brought out the manhood of the nation. Now, I say a nation to be a nation must have men - brave men!"

The same general feeling is expressed in Richard Feverel (p. 44): "In Austin the Magian conflict would not have lasted long. He had but a blind notion of the fierceness with which it raged in young Richard. Happily for the boy, Austin was not a preacher. A single instance, a cant phrase, a fatherly manner might have wrecked him by arousing latent or ancient opposition. The born preacher we feel instinctively to be our foe. He may do some good to the wretches that have been struck down and lie gasping on the

battlefield; he rouses antagonism in the strong."

Concerning convention in the forms of religious expression, Meredith often has a sly little laugh. A few passages from the novels may illustrate:

"'I see,' said Major Waring, as they left the farm, 'your aunt is of the godly who have no forgiveness.'

"'I'm afraid so,' cried Robert. 'Cold blood will never come to an understanding with hot blood, and the old lady's is like frozen milk. She's right in her way, I dare say. I don't blame her. Her piety's right enough, take it as you find it!'" (Rhoda Fleming, p. 205).

"'Really, ' Mrs. Doria said to her intimates, 'that boy's education acts like a disease on him. * * He is forever in some mad excess of his fancy, and what he will come to at last, heaven only knows. I sincerely pray that Austin will be able to bear it.'

"Threats of prayer, however, that harp upon their sincerity, are not very well worth having." (The Ordeal of Richard Feverel, p. 314).

"'Sup to-night, and mind ye say yer prayers before getting into bed; and no trying to flatter your Maker with your knees cuddled up to your chin under the counterpane. I do't myself sometimes, and I know one prayer out of bed's worth ten of 'm in.'" (Sandra Belloni, Chap. XXXV. Mrs. Chump conversing with Braintop.)

"Next to the interposition of the Gods, we pray for human fellowship when we are in a mess." (Evan Harrington, p. 102).

A somewhat more serious interpretation of Meredith upon this subject is found in a few other examples. In an interview with J.P. Collier: "Meredith spoke of the interior trials that young men have to face unaided, and said the encounter might be rendered easier if only men would teach their sons sanely and cautiously that evil is not always so repulsive as religion would have us believe, and that the right attitude toward what is so glibly called 'sin' is a great compassion. Finally he said, 'I am glad to see that there are men in religion who are advanced enough in these days to put that compassion into their discourse, - and who open their eyes with a truer and deeper recognition of things as they are.'" (North American Review, December, 1912, p. 842).

"I hope that ultimately we shall take teaching out of the hands of the clergy and that we shall be able to instruct the clergy in the fact that Christianity is a spiritual religion and not one that is to be governed by material conditions. A spiritual God I most perfectly believe in. I have that belief constantly before me - I feel it within me; but a material God that interferes in material, moral affairs, I have never seen; and it is, I am

sorry to say, for the material God that the clergy seem to be striving." (Meredith's statement given in an interview; The Novels of George Meredith, E.J.Bailey, p. 163).

In a letter to Arthur Meredith we find: "Keep pure in mind, unselfish of heart, and diligent in study. This is the right way of worshipping God, and is better than hymns and incense and sermons. We find it doubtful whether God blesses the latter, but cultivate the former and you are sure of him. Heed me well when I say this. And may God forever bless you; I pray it nightly." (Letters, V. 1, p. 195).

One other point in regard to Meredith's belief in Christianity may be considered. I have been unable to find a record of church affiliation of any kind, though he was christened in the Church of England. His sympathies are broad enough to tolerate all religious faiths, but I judge from the various views I have found expressed that his preference is slightly inclined to the nonconformists in religion. The only Protestant Evangelical church I have found even mentioned is the Methodist in The Amazing Marriage. These points, however, do not in any wise interfere with the interpretation of Meredith's belief in the fundamentals of Christianity.

CHAPTER IV.

Chapter IV.

No study of Meredith's ideas of religion would be complete without a consideration of his worship of God through Nature or Earth. Probably no poet has observed all things of earth more accurately, more lovingly than George Meredith, and I believe none has related his philosophy of life more definitely with Earth, the great mother. Several poems contain passages which express this philosophy.

In the Woods of Westermain, Section II, where he speaks of the occupants of the woods, Meredith says:

"Each has business of his own;
But should you distrust a stone
Then beware."

* * *

"But bring you a note
Wrangling, howsoe'er remote,
Discords out of discord spin
Round and round derisive din." (Section III)

* * *

"You of any well that springs
May unfold the heaven of things."

* * *

"Farther, deeper, you may read
Have you sight for things afield,
Where peeps she the Nurse of seed,
Cloaked, but in the peep revealed;
Showing a kind face and sweet
Look you with the soul you see't."

* * *

"You a larger self will find:
Sweetest fellowship ensues
With the creatures of your kind."

* * *

"You must love the light so well
That no darkness will seem fell.
Love it so you could accost
Fellowly a livid ghost.

(Section IV)

* * *

"Then you touch the nerve of Change
Then of Earth you have the clue;
Then her two-sexed meanings melt
Through you, wed the thought and felt."

* * *

"Blood and brain and spirit, three
(Say the deepest gnomes of Earth)
Join for true felicity.

* * *

Earth that triad is; she hides
Joy from him who that divides;
Showers it when the three are one
Glassing her in union.
Earth your haven, Earth your helm,
You command a double realm:
Laboring here to pay your debt
Till your little sun shall set;
Leaving her the future task
Loving her too well to ask."

The Thrush in February.

"For love we Earth, then serve we all,
Her mystic secret then is ours."

The Empty Purse.

"By my faith there is feasting to come,
Not the less, when our Earth we have seen
Beneath and on surface, her deeds and designs:
Who gives us the man-loving Nazarene,
The martyrs, the poets, the corn and the vines.
By my faith in the head, she has wonders in loom,
Revelations, delights."

"When our Earth we have seen, and have linked
 With the home of the Spirit to whom we unfold,
 Imprisoned humanity open will throw
 Its fortress gates, and the rivers of gold
 For the congregate friendliness flow.
 Then the meaning of Earth in her children behold:
 Glad eyes, frank hands, and a fellowship real:
 And laughter on lips, as the bird's outburst
 At the flooding of light."

* * *

"The God in the conscience of multitudes feel,
 And we feel deep to Earth at her heart,
 We have her communion with men,
 New ground, new skies for appeal."

Though there are numerous beautiful passages showing the closest observation of all nature throughout Meredith's poetry, perhaps these passages will show his attitude toward Earth to a fair degree. The poem A Faith on Trial shows the necessity of seeking Earth in our extremities and faith in the universal good in Nature:

"But this in myself did I know,
 Not needing a studious brow,
 Or trust in a governing star,
 While my ears held the jangled shout
 The children were lifting afar:
 That nature's at interflow
 With all of their past and now,
 Are chords to the Nature without
 Orbs to the greater whole:
 First then, nor utterly then
 Till our lord of sensations at war,
 The rebel, the heart, yields place
 To brain, each prompting the soul.
 Thus our dear Earth we embrace
 For the milk, her strength to men."

* * *

"In the charge of the Mother our fate;
 Her law as the one common weal."

* * *

"By death, as by Life, are we fed:
 The two are one spring; our bond
 With the numbers; with whom to unite
 Here feathers wings far beyond:
 Only they can waft us in flight,
 For they are Reality's flower."

In Meredith's letters, also, we find a few expressions of his faith in nature. To the Reverend Augustus Jessop he writes:

"I hold that to be rightly materialist - to understand and take nature as she is - is to get on the true divine highroad. That we should attain to a healthy humanity is surely the most pleasing thing in God's sight."
 (Letters, V. I, p. 136)

To Leslie Stephen: "We who have loved the motion of legs and the sweep of winds, we come to this. But for myself, I will own it is the natural order. There is no irony in Nature." (Letters, V. II, p. 555)

A few passages from the novels also express this idea of universality of Nature and her inviolable truth:

"His loathing of any shadow of a lie was a protest on behalf of Welsh blood against an English charge, besides the spiritual cleanliness; without which was no comprehension, therefore no enjoyment of nature possible to him. For nature is the truth." (The Amazing Marriage, p. 271)

"Death among us proves us to be still not so far from the Nature saying at every avenue of the mind: Earth

makes all sweet." (One of Our Conquerors, p. 408)

"The wind that bowed the old elms, and shivered the dead leaves in the air, had a voice and a meaning for the baronet during that half-hour's lonely pacing up and down under the darkness, awaiting his boy's return. The solemn gladness of his heart gave nature a tongue. Through the desolation flying overhead - the wailing of the Mother of Plenty across the bare-swept land - the intelligible signs of the beneficent order of the universe, from a heart newly confirmed in its grasp of the principle of human goodness, as manifested in the dear child who had just left him; confirmed in its belief in the ultimate victory of good within us, without which nature has neither music nor meaning, and is rock, stone, tree, and nothing more." (The Ordeal of Richard Feverel, p. 66)

A portion of a passage previously quoted from Lord Ormont and His Aminta (p. 217) also illustrates this point: "We do not get to any heaven by renouncing the mother we spring from; and when there is an eternal secret for us, it is best to believe that Earth knows, to keep near her, even in our utmost aspirations."

Through his attitude of trust in Earth, Meredith has at times been considered almost atheistic. I believe if one studies his works in general, however, he will interpret his point of view as nearer that of the psalmist: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament

showeth his handiwork." His faith is a worship of God through Earth, the foundation and end of mortal life, but his belief in the spiritual life is manifested always.

- One carefully reviewing all of Meredith's works will agree, I believe, that he stands as one of the true Christians of the nineteenth century writers, uninterested in dogma, scornful of insincerity in religious profession, earnestly believing in the practice of Christ's teaching of the doctrine of love for fellow man, forgiveness as we desire forgiveness, compassion for sin, and a fervent desire to know all the works of the Creator; observing and loving so deeply that rock, spring, plant, and bird all speak to him of the reality about him; and holding fast to the faith that we are to do our best on earth and trust to the great Good for the future.

* * BIBLIOGRAPHY * *

UNIVERSITY OF
MICHIGAN LIBRARY

Bibliography.

- | | |
|---|--|
| Meredith, George | The Adventures of Harry Richmond |
| Meredith, George | The Amazing Marriage |
| Meredith, George | Beauchamp's Career |
| Meredith, George | Diana of the Crossways |
| Meredith, George | The Egoist |
| Meredith, George | An Essay on Comedy and the Uses
of the Comic Spirit |
| Meredith, George | Evan Harrington |
| Meredith, George | Lord Ormont and His Aminta |
| Meredith, George | One of Our Conquerors |
| Meredith, George | The Ordeal of Richard Feverel |
| Meredith, George | Poems |
| Meredith, George | Rhoda Fleming |
| Meredith, George | Sandra Belloni |
| Meredith, George | The Tragic Comedians |
| Meredith, George | Vittoria |
| | Letters of George Meredith, collected
and edited by his son. |
| Bailey, Elmer J. | The Novels of George Meredith |
| Beach, Joseph Warren | The Comic Spirit in George Meredith |
| Forman, M.B. | George Meredith, some early appreciations |
| Harris, Frank | Contemporary Portraits |
| Henderson, Archibald | Interpreters of Life and the Modern
Spirit |
| Henderson, Mrs. May S. | George Meredith, novelist, poet,
reformer |
| Moffatt, James | George Meredith, Introduction to his
novels |
| Price, Arthur | George Meredith, his life, genius, and
teaching, from the French, by
Constantine Photiades |
| Scott, Dixon | George Meredith's Letters (from <u>Men</u> of
Letters, p. 238-244) |
| Sharp, William | George Meredith, an estimate of his
work in prose and verse from Papers
critical and reminiscent |
| Symonds, Arthur | Figures of Several Centuries |
| Advance of the English Novel. W.L.Phelps. Bookman 43:173-80. | |
| Barbed shafts of Meredith's criticism. Current Literature 53:
458-9. | |
| Bibliography of George Meredith. L.S.Livingston. Nation 94:
311-2. | |
| Box Hill and its memories. S.Colvin. Scribner's Magazine 60:
201-9. | |
| Diana of the Crossways reconsidered. S.M.Ellis. Living Age 290:
694-8. | |

George Meredith as I knew him. A.Austin. Bellman 22: 604-5.
George Meredith, his life and friends in relation to his work.
S.M.Ellis. Review by Simon Pure. Bookman 49: 288-90.
George Meredith's childhood. S.M.Ellis. Fortnightly Review 98:
861-8.
George Meredith's own love story. Literary Digest 345: 221-3.
Has the blending of prose and poetry resulted in a literary
hybrid? Current Opinion 60: 280.
Heroic unpopularity of George Meredith. Current Literature 53:
702-4.
Lover of flowers and birds and children. Outlook 94: 718-9.
Maddening Mr. Meredith. E.Frazer. Forum 53: 499-508.
Meredith after ten years. S.C.Chew. Nation 108: 786-8.
Meredith revealed. R.Lynd. Living Age.301: 54-6.
Meredith's Letters. S.M.Ellis. Fortnightly Review 100: 287-95.
Meredith's prevision of War. Literary Digest.52: 820.
Poet's Wisdom. G.Slaughter. North American 207: 82-90.
Silent power of the publishers reader: George Meredith rejected
many popular books and discovered several new writers.
Current Opinion 67: 122-3.
Unacknowledged imagist. J.L.Lowes. Nation 102: 217-19.
Was George Meredith really a novelist? Current Opinion 66: 185.