

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 round 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 the spirit of humor that is moving you.

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

Under all his humor and brilliance lies a fund of what the French call *le gros bon sens commun Anglais*—the gross common sense of John Bull. But his genius breaks forth in such a dazzling coruscation that only the student gets to the heart of him. The average reader, in a hurry to get on with the story, is blinded by his very light and cannot see at all.

Obscure

The owl and the bat blundering in the daylight are like the readers who call Meredith obscure. People whose minds are fed on what is known as light literature—which is not literature from any point of view—do not love books that expect them to use their brains. And as the number of readers whose only literature is light literature is legion, it is not astonishing to find obscurity attributed to Meredith, with less reason on that it has been to Browning. Meredith was primarily a psychologist: character meant most to him. It is therefore a mistake to take him up and read him for the sake of incident and adventure as has become too much the habit with readers nowadays. There is the first point at which he baffles ordinary readers. Again, Meredith was a poet, and as a poet he found it hard to tell a tale in a common way. He was rich in metaphors and images, full of brilliant by-play, abounding in sparkling comment and aside. He dressed the bare bones in such attractive garments that one forgot for a moment that there were any bones at all. We ought to regard him as a classic writer and to approach him with the intense application with which we would take up for study a novel by Flaubert or a play by Moliere: in other words unless we are ready to raise ourselves to meet him we shall not meet him at all.

Meredith the Poet

For a small sum one can buy George Meredith's *Poems*. There are not many of them; they are not lengthy; but what there is is good. The English critics received his verse as coldly as his prose; but Swinburne who knew what poetry is fell upon the Philistines and boldly asserted that the century that has gone did not produce four greater poets than George Meredith. Here is a sample of his power—two stanzas that Swinburne loved for their melody and beauty:

Happy, happy time, when the white star hovers
Low over dim fields fresh with bloomy dew,
Near the face of dawn, that draws athwart the darkness,
Threading it with color, like the yewberries the yew.

Thicker crowd the shades as the grey East deepens
Glowing, and with crimson a long cloud swells.
Maiden still the morn is; and strange she is, and secret;
Strange her eyes; her cheeks are cold as cold sea-shells.

It often happened that when the writer of these Notes was a boy he was living for some months together in a house that had many of Meredith's works under its roof. Books read in youth are best remembered, though one sometimes sadly thinks of the good old books that we shall not have leisure to read again.

Old memories are bound up with our acquaintance with *Evan Harrington*, *Rhoda Fleming*, and *Richard Ferverel*, and certain other works by writers not much read nowadays whom our then host loved. What a boon it would be for the present rising generation if the 'Good People'—as the Irish call the fairies—would come hither and remove from all book shops the trash that stands between us and the best in literature. Mr. Dooley once said that he propped himself up behind the Bible and Shakespere and left Hall Caine and Marie Corelli raging outside. Most of us would do very well to imitate him in that, taking the Bible and Shakespere as meaning good literature in general, sacred and profane.

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN

There was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from the eleven o'clock Mass at St. Joseph's Cathedral on Sunday last. After Compline in the evening there was the usual procession and Solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

St. Joseph's Cathedral parish committee of the Catholic Federation met at St. Joseph's Hall after devotions on last Sunday evening. Very Rev. Father Coffey, Adm., presided, and there was quite a large attendance of members. The principal business had reference to the Federation scholarships and preparations for the annual meeting.

An effort is being made to strengthen the membership of St. Joseph's Cathedral Choir, which of late has diminished somewhat in numbers through the departure of some of its vocalists. Those amongst the congregation who are happily possessed of good musical voices are urged to join the choir (which is one that has always enjoyed a high reputation for efficiency). The present enrolment of members will afford an excellent opportunity to young singers to improve themselves in so popular an accomplishment. Those desirous of joining are invited to attend the choir practice on any Thursday evening at St. Joseph's Hall.

A ceremony of profession took place on last Thursday morning in the chapel of the Convent of Mercy, South Dunedin, when Sister Mary Aidan Adamson and Sister Mary Celestine O'Regan made their vows. His Lordship the Bishop, Right Rev. Dr. Whyte, officiated, the assistant priest being Rev. R. Graham. Rev. J. Delany, Rev. H. E. Rooney, and Rev. F. Marlow were also present. Taking for his text the words of St. Matthew's Gospel, "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul," his Lordship gave a touching discourse on the religious life; he congratulated the young Sisters on the choice they were making and exhorted them to go on courageously in the path of self-sacrifice marked out for them by their Holy Rule. The incidental music was feelingly rendered by the Sisters' choir. After the ceremony his Lordship the Bishop, the clergy, and relatives of the newly professed Sisters were entertained by the community.

Misses Kathleen McDevitt, A.T.C.L., and Marie McMahan, A.T.C.L., have been notified of their success in the higher theoretical examinations (Art of Teaching and Rudiments of Music) in connection with Trinity College, London. Both young ladies received their entire musical education from the Sisters of Mercy at St. Philomena's College, South Dunedin.

On Saturday, 35 of the younger children from St. Vincent's Orphanage spent a pleasant day at the Woodhaugh Gardens, where all things dear to the hearts of little ones were provided for them by several lady friends. On behalf of the children the Sisters of Mercy desire to thank the promoters of this outing—Mesdames Paine, Carter, Clark, and Wilson.

A retreat which is at present being conducted for the members of St. Patrick's Sodality of Children of Mary, South Dunedin, by Rev. Father Herring, Marist Missioner, will close on next Sunday evening, when a number of aspirants to the sodality will be consecrated.

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