

The first patient which the above-named visitor saw was a parrot which screeched and yelled in a manner which convinced him that there was nothing wrong with its lungs, but he reflected that a "well-regulated" parrot would keep on screeching even if at the point of death. Professor Atkinson, the moving spirit of the institution, presently gave an example of how he tries to teach humanity to some of the owners of his patients by appealing to their pockets. A man brought in a poor broken-down horse, and, pointing at the animal, remarked: "Fell darn three times yus'day, guv'nor. She orter be good for a lot o' work yet. Cost me nine pun ten. There must be summick the matter wif'er." Professor Atkinson, after an examination, declared that what the patient most needed was food and rest, adding impressively to the owner: "It will pay you to feed that mare well. There's some real good stuff in her."

Presently a little girl came into the yard hugging a rabbit in her arms and followed by four small boys. Walking straight up to the Professor, and still clasping the rabbit to her breast, she poured out her story. "It was a moving history," says the visitor, "in which Papa and Mama, and Georgie and Ada and Bunny all played a part, and the headlong speed at which it was delivered did not tend to clear up matters."

Having dismissed Bunny's small protectors, reassured and radiant, the Professor gave some idea of the variety of his practice; at one time he is setting a broken leg for a tiger, and at another attending to a pet white rat brought to him by a famous society beauty in her muff.

Questioned as to our attitude, as a people, towards animals, Professor Atkinson expressed it as his opinion that we are very clement and humane compared with other races. There is little in our midst of the fiendish cruelty towards animals, of the lower class Italians, nevertheless there is enough cruelty and to spare. A great deal of it springs from sheer thoughtlessness or ignorance. "In London alone," says Professor Atkinson, "there are hundreds of cab horses which every day go through a positive hell of suffering. The drivers are not to blame. They do not even know that their horses are in pain. This terrible suffering might be so easily obviated."

Of all the higher animals, the horse is perhaps the most silent in suffering pain, and the driver of a horse is thus kept in ignorance of his suffering, if he is not an educated observer. It is said that horses sometimes scream with combined pain and fright on the battlefield, but, usually, they will bear intense pain without uttering even a groan. To some persons it does not seem to occur that an animal may be in extreme torture without giving any vocal expression to it; for instance, when an overloaded horse, with, very probably, wounds hidden beneath its harness, is at last driven to desperation, and kicks in response to cuts from the driver's whip, it is frequently a source of merriment to the by-standers.

On the other hand, sympathy does not appear to be wanting in any class of society when people know that animals are in trouble. A friend of ours, an Irish Roman Catholic, who earns a precarious living by keeping a fruit and sweet-stuff stall, has told us how she feels for the poor horses in the winter when the roads are slippery with ice, and how she prays to the "dear God to help them up, and He does."

A Book of the Week.

"LORD ORMONT AND HIS AMINTA."*

SOME years ago, Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson avowed himself "a true blue Meredith man." Many other inquiring and thoughtful minds have acknowledged Meredith to be a true philosopher and poet; but so many people do not agree with this verdict that it is an exceedingly difficult task for any one, even a humble follower of the Meredithian camp, to write of the Leader without laying themselves open to the imputation of indulging in credulous enthusiasm for an incomprehensible prophet. For the fact of the matter is that, though a large and growing number of readers appreciate Mr. Meredith's writings, there are also a vast number of the sons and daughters of men who most decidedly do not. There are even many quite intelligent people who consider Meredith incomprehensible, and others who, after considerable exertion, do succeed in understanding some of his philosophy, frankly own that they don't think that it is worth the trouble. The works of George Meredith are in fact like Caviare, a luxury to an epicure, and something more than merely distasteful to those who do not appreciate that costly Russian dainty. Reading Meredith is like looking at some object in a microscope with a high power lens, it is as much a fatigue and a strain to the mental eye as working with a tenth of an inch lens is to the physical eye. Moreover, the analogy can be pressed further, for just as in the high power lens surrounding objects become dwarfed and blurred so that only one important point can be brought into the right focus for observation and examination, so with much of Meredith's writing; the heart of a situation is laid open, the arteries and veins of a character are laid bare for our edification, but the result of the whole does not always leave a harmonious impression upon our minds, and, moreover, the exertion required to comprehend, leaves us, mentally, out of breath.

A great deal of modern fictional literature is exceedingly enervating and unprofitable reading, for, in these degenerate days, most people like their thinking done for them, and resent any strain upon their mental faculties; but George Meredith will have none of this, he insists on our climbing and scrambling with him along the thorny and precipitous path of thought; up out of the forest of prejudice and preconceived opinion he drags us along, sparing us nothing, smoothing over no hard places, erecting no stiles for us over prickly hedges of argument. Breathless and panting we struggle along, but if we have pluck and endurance to bear the sting of the nettles and the scratching of the thorns, up above the forest upon the dizzy heights of daring, he will, and does, preach to us his sermon on the Mount.

Let no overtired brain venture, however, to take up Meredith for relaxation; he does not pander to the idle hours between tea and dinner, nor cater for the sleepy hammock on a hot summer afternoon; if we are to read him with profit to ourselves it must be with loins girt and staff in hand, we must be awake and alert in every fibre of our mind if we desire to apprehend his meaning, and understand his

*"Lord Ormont and his Aminta." By George Meredith. 3 vols. 30s. (London: Chapman & Hall, 1894.)

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