

suggestive and inspiring teaching. To many anxious and sorrowful lives Meredith has proved himself a physician to heal, and far more than any modern woman writer, Meredith has proclaimed himself the advocate for the woman with brains and intelligence, as well as heart and feelings. As Mr. Le Gallienne has said in an able criticism of his work, he is at once "the laureate and the psychologist of woman."

Mr. Meredith's first novel, "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel," was published in 1859; Sir Austen Feverel remarks:—

"I expect that woman will be the last thing civilized by man."

And further he says:—

"Woman, when she wrestles for supremacy with every one she encounters, is but seeking her master."

But if I once begin to quote aphorism from this book Feverel my column would soon be exhausted. Richard Feverel is undoubtedly the most human, as it is the most poetic, of Mr. Meredith's writings. I wish to recall the novel to your memory, with its passages of musical prose, its profound knowledge of human nature, and its brilliant wit. Later, many other volumes have appeared, and there are some people who prefer the "Egoist," and consider that the most perfectly artistic of Meredith's writings, while others delight in "Diana of the Crossways," her womanly wiles and fascinating individuality; while, again, others quote "Harry Richmond," "Evan Harrington," and "Beauchamp's Career," as their favourite novel, and George Eliot was keenly appreciative of that Arabian Nights' production, "The Shaving of Shagpat."

The great stumbling-block to the average reader, is, undoubtedly, Mr. Meredith's style—it is peculiar, and though at times it is brilliantly suggestive, yet I must own that the metaphors are often strained and sometimes unnatural, that many of the characters talk Meredithian language in jerks and quips and cranky utterances, that Meredithian is not always English, and often needs translation before it can be comprehended, and that, further still, this Master, great, ingenious, profound, and admirable as he is, yet lacks the crowning virtue of a great teacher—simplicity. The fairies who presided over his birth, endowed him with all their choicest gifts, but the spirit of obscurantism cast his misty spell over all, and at one time threatened to neutralise them all; and yet there are in English reading countries many groping souls who trying to "foot behind Meredith the upward hill," have profited, to their everlasting good, by the fine discipline of this endeavour, and have reason to thank him cordially for much mental health gained by the development and growth of their ideas and opinions.

Next week I shall hope to review his last novel, "Lord Ormont and his Aminta," which I find I have not left myself space enough to speak of to-day.

A. M. G.

## Reviews.

"Sick-Room Charts." Messrs. Stickland & Co., the well-known pharmaceutical chemists in South Kensington have published some improved Sick-room charts, designed in order to enable Nurses to present their reports in a very concise and simple

manner. Seven pages are firmly attached to a cardboard backing, each page being divided into a day and a night report, and ruled across at (printed) half-hour intervals. The columns are headed for the hour, the nature of the nutriment, stimulant and medicine given, the duration of sleep, pulse and respiration, and the excretions. This enables the doctor, therefore, to see at a glance the precise amount of nourishment, or stimulant, or sleep, which the patient has had in the twenty-four hours. At the end, there is a temperature chart, ruled for "three-hour temperatures." The arrangement can, therefore, be described as very complete, and will prove useful in assisting Nurses to make their reports exact.

## Notes on Art.

### WOOD ENGRAVING.

THE last notes on art, dealt with what might at first sight appear to be a somewhat commonplace subject, for the only mural decorations which London permits itself, take the form of coloured posters on its walls. An attempt was made to show how important such work may really be made. At this season of the year, when art exhibitions are drawing to a close, it may, perhaps, be well to turn to those branches of art, which our familiarity leads us to think little about.

The present column of notes will, therefore, be devoted to Engraving, in some of its varied forms. Let us first take book illustrations, and as these words are set down, the writer naturally opens the oldest illustrated book at hand. Its beautifully tooled vellum binding is hopeful, but it does not contain very early engravings after all, for it was only printed at Basle in 1556, and wood engraving had been known for some hundred years; but how quaint and crisp the old blocks are, and how beautifully they take their place with the engraved initial letters, as part of the decoration of a page. They are not stuck in anyhow without considering whether they will be balanced by printed type, but the defect of modern book illustration is that no such care to balance print and block is taken, and in spite of the wealth of method and material that the modern book illustrator has at command, the result is, too often, sadly inartistic. "The type is, as it were," says Mr. Reginald Blomfield, in connection with a recent Arts and Crafts Exhibition, "the technical datum of the design which determines the scale of the lines to be used with it." He justly points out that no better model can be taken than Dürer's wood cuts, "for the amount of work that this great artist would get out of a single line is something extraordinary," and probably no modern designer can "hope to attain the great German's magnificent directness and tremendous intensity of expression."

It will be evident, therefore, that it is well for us to think about the common illustrations we find in books, in the few minutes, we hard working women, have to spare for the desultory culture of art.

It is still possible to find such magnificent examples of modern wood engraving, as the head of the late Cardinal Manning engraved by Charles Roberts,

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