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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—THE PULPIT AND FICTION.

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A DISTINGUISHED American preacher, in the course of a sermon given in the city of Boston, made a violent onslaught on novels and drew a strong indictment against them. To make his discourse the more pointed he cited Thackeray as an instance of a common vice in novels, viz., a maltreatment of Christians, painting them either as milk-sops or knaves. It chanced that Thackeray was in the audience, and seeking an interview with the preacher after the service enlightened him on some points. It is safe to say that this minister did not again choose Thackeray to point his morals. The incident is worth recalling simply to show that in the treatment of some topics (among which surely is novel-reading) which call loudly for some treatment from religious teachers, wise discrimination is a cardinal virtue. A more timely theme than that which heads this article we cannot well imagine. Recent years have marked an enormous increase in the production of fiction. The law of supply and demand holds as well in literature as in manufactures. The demand is enormous and increasing. New novelists come into vogue every season. A successful novel is an assured source of income. The receipts of such a writer as George Eliot make a very comfortable fortune. Many novels are born only to die—never reaching a second edition. But one has only to look at the indexes of the Seaside Library or Lovell's Library to take in at a glance the amazing growth of this species of literature. In fact it is a literary phenomenon which has only one counterpart in the history of literature, viz., the dramatic tendency in the reign of Elizabeth. Then, and long after, everything ran to drama. It should seem indeed as if the novel-writing tendency would cease soon from sheer exhaustion. All possible plots, all possible varieties of human character would appear likely to be soon used up. As yet, however, this result has not been reached, unless the appearance of such a story as Mr. Haggard's "She" would