

The Westminster Confession is an elastic document, but it seems hopeless so to stretch it as to cover Professor Smith. If the Books comprising the Old Testament have been "committed to writing" by God, as it teaches, and derive their authority from being His word, hostile criticism like Professor Smith's is clearly inadmissible. According to its statement of the case, "the Old Testament (*i.e.*, the Books specially mentioned as comprising it) in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek, *being immediately inspired by God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages*, are therefore authentic." Compare with this Professor Smith's theory of the origin and growth of the Hebrew Scriptures, the composite character of many of them, the fragmentary nature of others, the wholesale mixing up of different narratives, the liberties taken by copyists, and the hopeless antagonism between the method and results of his criticism and the orthodox creed becomes apparent. It is a strange commentary on God's "singular care and providence" in keeping "pure in all ages" the various Books of the Old Testament, to be told of one of them, the Song of Solomon, that "this lyric drama has suffered much from interpolation, and presumably was not written down till a comparatively late date, and from imperfect recollection, so that its original shape is very much lost."

Such criticism may be thoroughly scientific; it may mark the rise of a higher conception of the scope and value of the teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures; leaving behind what is local and temporary merely, and seizing hold of what is universal and eternal, it may point even to a deeper and more reverent apprehension of the far-reaching spiritual truth contained in them; it may indicate that the degrading superstition which found a fetish in the mere Book alone, every word and letter of which was regarded as of equal value, is passing away, like the mist which curls up on the mountain side before the rising sun. But there can be as little doubt in the mind of any candid reader, free from the casuistry and sophism of church courts and ecclesiastical politicians, that such "Higher Criticism," in itself and the results to which it necessarily leads, is altogether inconsistent with, and contradictory of not only the spirit and whole tenor of the recognised creed of the church, but also its express teaching on the subject.

ENDYMION.

Endymion, the latest production from the Disraelian pen has been published, and has no doubt met with a large sale both here and in England. Apart from the reputation of the author, the sale has doubtless been largely increased by the fact that a very large sum was paid for the copyright and that many political celebrities were described in the work. To many readers on this side these political celebrities are purely historical and the faithfulness or truth of their delineation cannot be very adequately determined. Many of the delineations are but curt and incomplete and the natural consequence has been that they are applicable to more than one personage, and that their truthfulness or impartiality cannot be finally decided upon, even by those who are competent to judge. There is nothing new as regards literary style in the work and it is full of mannerisms and antitheses; these latter in many cases are mere platitudes. The colouring in the work essentially emanates from Oriental dreams and Beaconsfield in this tale is not at his best as he is in relating the wondrous tale of Alroy, or in telling us of Tancred. This Oriental bent of mind we have seen in his political policy which has abounded in romantic impossible dreams, and which would no doubt have led to the inauguration of the Empress of India as Empress of Egypt and Syria as well. His fanciful mind exults and rejoices in ethereal dreams and he believes that the wildest theories ought to be the ultima Thule of political ambition.

In Endymion we find but little attention paid to chronology as it abounds in anachronisms, (description of the Tourney) and the noble author has succeeded in giving us a somewhat artistic picture of himself and his experiences but it is worthless historically. Even in his delineations of personages he tones them down and colours their characteristics to accord with his own views, or rather to accord with what he believes they ought to have been. Combined with this, there is no plot, the merit of the work consisting in his analysis of character, whether historically true or not, in his criticisms of human motives and his knowledge of human nature.

There is a very great similarity between this work and "Lothair,"—the thoughts, expressions and epigrams are much the same. There is the same tendency to toady to aristocracy and its surroundings, and he throws a glamour over the relations of noble ladies to the hero, Endymion. All of them are in love with him or with others, with which circumstance their husbands seem to be curiously unacquainted;—this is very strange, and will be a new fact (?) to many. Endymion (who is presumed to represent the author) is drawn as a man of ability and ambition; as one who does not carve his way to fame and fortune, but waits for opportunities and for assistance from noble ladies; his progress is due to accident, and he thinks himself ill-used if a cross word is spoken and sulks. The characters in the novel are supposed to represent the following personages:—Agrippina is Queen Hortense, Prince Florestin is Napoleon III., Lord Roehampton is Lord Palmerston, Nigel Penruddock is Cardinal Manning, Lord Waldershare is Lord Sfrangford, Lord Montfort is Lord Melbourne, Job Thornbery is Cobden, Sir Francuys Scrope is Sir Francis

Burdett, Neuchatel is Rothschild, Sidney Wilton is Sidney Herbert (Secretary of War), Count of Ferroll is Bismarck, Vigo is Poole, and Hortensius (of whom only a sketch is given) is somewhat applicable to Gladstone. The following extracts are the descriptions of the above characters:—

Agrippina was a "lady fair and singularly thin. It seemed that her delicate hand must really be transparent. Her cheek was sunk, but the expression of her large, brown eyes was excessively pleasing. She wore her own hair—once the most celebrated in Europe—and still uncovered. Though the prodigal richness of the tresses had disappeared, the arrangement was still striking from its grace. That rare quality pervaded the being of this lady, and it was impossible not to be struck with her courage as she advanced to greet her guest, free from all affectation and yet full of movement and gesture, which might have been a study for painters." * * * "It was a court of pleasure, if you like; but of pleasure that animated and refined and put the world in good humour—which, after all, is good government. The most dissolute court on the continent of Europe that I have known," she says, "has been outwardly the dullest and most decorous." * * * "Throned or disrowned, music has ever been the charm and consolation of my life." The Queen refers to her son, the future Emperor, as "soft-hearted, affectionate and mysterious; acquiring knowledge with facility, silent and solitary, never giving an opinion, seeming always to be thinking."

Prince Florestan was one who rarely spoke; he was a man of action and thought, but "the weakness of the Prince—if he was one—is not want of knowledge or want of judgment, but an over-confidence in his star which sometimes educes him into enterprises which he himself feels at the time are not perfectly sound."

Lord Roehampton was one "in whose combined force and flexibility of character the country has confidence, as in all their counsels there would be no lack of courage, yet tempered with adroit discretion. He was a very ambitious and, as it was thought, worldly man, deemed even by many unscrupulous, and yet he was romantic. He was somewhat advanced in middle life, tall, and of a stately presence, with a voice even more musical with the tones that recently charmed every one. His countenance was impressive, a true Olympian brow, but the lower part of the face indicated, not feebleness, but flexibility, and his mouth was somewhat sensuous." * * * "A great favourite with society, and especially with the softer sex." * * * "Gifted with a sweet temper, and though people said he had no heart, with a winning tenderness of disposition, or, at least, of manner, which at the same time charmed and soothed." * * * "Too sagacious to be deceived by any one, even by himself." * * * "Scarcely without vanity." * * * "An Irish peer, and resolved to remain so, for he truly appreciated a position which united social distinction with power and a seat in the House of Commons."

Nigel Penruddock's religious change of thought and feeling is well pictured; he had a voice which was "startling and commanding; his expression forcible and picturesque. All were attracted to him by his striking personal appearance and the beauty of his face. He seemed something between a young prophet and an inquisitor,—a remarkable blending of enthusiasm and self-control." On his return from Rome, a fanatic and a Roman Catholic, "the immense but inspired labours which awaited him and his deep sense of his responsibility." * * * "Instead of avoiding society, as was his wont in old days, the Archbishop sought it, and there was nothing exclusive in his social habits. All classes and all creeds and all conditions and orders of men were interesting to him." * * * "He was a frequent guest at banquets, which he never tasted, for he was a smiling ascetic, and though he seemed to be preaching or celebrating high masses in every part of the metropolis, organizing schools, establishing convents and building cathedrals, he could find time to move philanthropic resolutions and even occasionally send a paper to the Royal Society."

Lord Waldershare was "the slave of an imagination so freakish that it was always impossible to foretell his course." * * * "His versatile nature, which required not only constraint but novel excitement, became pallid even with the society of duchesses." There was a monotony in the splendor of aristocratic life which wearied him." * * * "He was alike incapable of sacrificing all his feelings to worldly considerations or forgetting the worldly for a visionary caprice."

Lord Montfort "was heard of in every capital except his own. He lived in Paris in Sybaritic seclusion, much with the old families of France in their haughty faubourgs. He was the only living Englishman who gave one the idea of a gentleman of the eighteenth century. He was totally devoid of a sense of responsibility. There was no subject, human or divine, in which he took the slightest interest. He entertained for human nature generally, and without exception, the most signal contempt. He had a sincere and profound conviction that no man or woman ever acted except from selfish and interested motives. Society was intolerable to him, and that of his own set and station wearisome beyond expression. Their conversation consisted only of two subjects—horses and women—and he had long exhausted both. As for female society, if there were ladies it was expected that in some form or other he should make love to them, and he had no sentiment." "He attempted to read. A woman told him to read French novels, but he found them only a clumsy representation of life which for years he been practically living. An accident made him acquainted with Rabelais and Montaigne, and he relished them, for he had a fine sense of humour." * * * "No one could say Lord Montfort was a bad-hearted man, for he had no heart. He was good-natured, provided it brought him no inconvenience, and as for temper, he was never disturbed; but this not from sweetness of disposition, rather from a contemptuous fine taste which assured him that a gentleman should never be deprived of tranquillity in the world where nothing was of the slightest consequence."

Hortensius is thus described as he concluded a debate:—

"Safe from reply and reckless in his security it is not easy to describe the audacity of his retorts or the tumult of his language. Rapid, sarcastic, humorous, picturesque, impassioned, he seemed to carry everything before him and to resemble his former self in nothing but the music of his voice, which lent melody to scorn and sometimes reached the depths of pathos."

The scope of the novel consists in the presentment, such as it is, of the inner side of political life from the time of Canning to the advent to power of Lord Derby. That the work will have permanent popularity is doubtful and it is extremely probable that the somewhat fictitious interest at present taken in Endymion will soon cease. In one passage of the work there is an excellent encomium upon the Press, rather a change from the phrase—"the hare-brained chatter of irresponsible frivolity."

Sappho.