

GEORGE MEREDITH: A Study of His Works and Personality. By J. H. E. Crees. Longmans, Green; \$2.

That the Essay on Comedy presents its author's conception of the true aim of the novel; that Meredith satirized sentimentalists and delighted in the poetry of youth; that "his verse is lacking in the finest sense of form"; that his obscurity "proceeds from high-strained intellectual activity, not from laziness or incompetence"; that novels are written "to show characters in action and development"; that "we do not in real life talk like Meredithian characters," are among the not unfamiliar conclusions reached by Mr. Crees in his two hundred odd pages devoted to George Meredith. Mr. Crees announces that probably every one who journeys through Meredith will prefer to tell his own story. Granted that this be true, there seems to be nothing so novel about Mr. Crees' itinerary that he should tell it out loud.

Perhaps the most interesting fact about the book is that Mr. Crees is the author of *The Reign of the Emperor Probus* and headmaster of a grammar school. These facts may explain his continual hankering after the Greeks. Every now and then, while the critic is talking about Meredith, one has an uneasy suspicion that he would much prefer to chat about Euripides. If Mr. Crees had had the courage of his instincts he might have given us a pretty study of the Hellenic aspects of Meredith; but he prefers to talk about *enthousiasmos* and to write a book which, if it is nowhere wrong, is not indispensable.