

**MEREDITH'S  
ALLEGORY. THE  
SHAVING OF SHAGPAT**

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Meredith's Allegory. The Shaving of Shagpat by James McKechnie

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**JAMES MCKECHNIE**

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ALLEGORY. THE  
SHAVING OF SHAGPAT**



Meredith's Allegory  
**THE SHAVING OF  
SHAGPAT**

INTERPRETED  
BY  
JAMES McKECHNIE

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#### NOTE.

It is not as seeking to issue this book under the ægis of Meredith's approval that his letter appears here. Such approval as it contains refers not to the present work but to an essay published some years ago on the same subject. Meredith's letter is given because it reveals his opinions not on my work but on his own. It may fail to convince certain folks that "The Shaving of Shagpat" is an Allegory—but it cannot fail to convince them that Meredith at least intended it to be so.

APPROVED TO BE  
REPRODUCED BY  
THE  
PUBLISHERS

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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>FACSIMILE OF LETTER FROM MEREDITH</b>	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> . . . . .	9
<b>THE WOOINGS OF NOORNA</b>	
Preparation . . . . .	25
Hesitation . . . . .	35
Decision . . . . .	49
<b>THE QUEST OF THE SPELLS</b>	
Insight . . . . .	67
Enthusiasm . . . . .	79
Idealism . . . . .	89
<b>THE SWAY OF RABESQURAT</b>	
Speculation . . . . .	109
Illusion . . . . .	123
Vanity . . . . .	141
<b>DOINGS OF THE SONS OF AKLIS</b>	
Purgation . . . . .	159
Equipment . . . . .	177
Temptation . . . . .	193
<b>THE BALDNESS OF SHAGPAT</b>	
Plottings . . . . .	211
Battles . . . . .	223
Spoils . . . . .	241

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May 21 - 1906

BOX HILL.

DORKING.

Dear Sir,

You have  
done as much as could  
be done with the advertisement  
barber. An Allegory is  
hateful to the English,  
& I gave it clothing to  
conceal its frame. But  
neither that nor the



signification avoided.  
Very few even of my  
friends have cared to  
read the book, & of  
those I can count  
but two who have  
said ~~the~~ word in  
favor of it. I regret  
to think that although

you may be indemnified  
for the cost of pollution  
your labour will be  
unrewarded.

Yours truly  
George M. Smith

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## INTRODUCTION

**W**HY make a riddle of truth, as if truth were not riddle enough in itself? When poser of this sort is put to the defender of allegory, let him know himself in hearing of the triumphant neighings of horse-sense, and maintain respectful silence. Before a tribunal amenable to finer pleadings it may avail him to claim for allegory that it is self-help translated into a literary expedient—that between other books and it the difference is as between giving a man a dinner of venison and showing him the deer-tracks in the forest, inviting him to capture his dinner. For while allegory is provocative and regulative of ideas, it cannot be said to gift them. It is merely an empty mould, stimulating and guiding in us an outflow of thought to its up-filling. To read allegory is thus to read oneself. It is a magnet to draw out