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STUDIES IN THE PSYCHOLOGIC REALISM IN THE NOVELS OF

GEORGE ELIOT.

by

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STUDIES IN THE PSYCHOLOGIC REALISM IN THE NOVELS

OF GEORGE ELIOT.

## INTRODUCTION.

An examination into the sense in which this term applies to George Eliot's novels.

## INTRODUCTION.

....

"All novels of the inner life are psychological." (1) In so far that they portray behaviour as a reflex of mental conditions, this is true. Thus the romances with excess of imagination and idealistic activity come within this class. Their emphasis upon that which appears strange and fascinating, the heroic, chivalrous, adventurous, fanciful and mysterious, was but the reaction toward a visionary world, a correlative of Mediaeval theology, which taught the reality of the unseen. The eighteenth century with its emphasis upon staccato conventionalism reacted upon the novel. In Richardson, the display of emotion suffusing ideas covered them with a vein of sentiment, but it kept close to the actual experiences of life. In Fielding, Smollet and Sterne, we have the almost flagrant declination toward the brutally realistic. The romantic revival in poetry toward the end of the century rescued the novel from its sordid carousal of brute instincts, but failed to produce the balance between conscious effort and external situation. It was left for the nineteenth century to carry the lines of development to their ultimate fruition.

In a mere introduction, the history of psychological development in the novel is far too pretentious an undertaking, but sufficient indications of the trend can be offered to show that the process was one of discovery. The distinguished novelists of the nineteenth century were products of the emphasis peculiar to the time. With Scott we have the

(1) "Development of English Novel", Cross: P.236.

external, romantic and lively descriptions, but, though they provide emotional situations, the psychic forces are more implied than explained. Discussing Scott as of the Romantic type, L. E. Gates says: "He touched the men of his day into a vital sense of kinship with the men of the Middle Ages - with the men of those 'ages of faith' wherein life was lived passionately and imaginatively under haunted heavens. And so he gave to his readers both a new belief in their hearts and imaginations and a great mass of new feelings and sympathies. He gave a potential gift to each of his readers of an individual past of a thousand years of intense living." (1) Dress and manners, both of individuals as types and people as groups, are elaborately portrayed, but the soul as an emotive force seldom, then only as the sum total of the emotions under which the situation labors. Fanny Burney and Jane Austen, from the standpoint of the psychic, are more of the school of Richardson, in the case of Jane Austen a tendency to what Lewes called "sentience"<sup>(2)</sup> rather than sentiment. But the Brontes, particularly Charlotte, show a distinct advance. "Jane Eyre" is full of emotive force. Tradition and environment begin to play their part, and though heredity has not yet received the stamp of a controlling influence, it is felt as an unconscious trend in character. Her characters act more according to the special bias of their nature, giving to responsibility a new meaning. This prepared the way for that passionate Victorianism in situations surging with emotions, traced to life impulses the individual shares with the race.

Dickens and Thackeray as well as Scott and Jane Austen interpreted the

(1) "Studies and Appreciations", L.E.Gates: P. 6.

(2) "History of Psychology", G.S. BRER P 221.

inner life of the Transcendentalism in vogue during the first part of the century. This inner life as portrayed by them appears to spring from "reasons", as Coleridge called it, to 'imaginative faith', as it was called by Wordsworth, to intuitions, or spiritual instincts, as others preferred to say." (1) Ethics, following the trend of the scientific approach, was seeking a sanction in social motives, and insisting upon an explanation of the conditions in which motives arise. The steadily growing scientific attitude formed a pole of thought with the transcendental, and the result of this interaction was an increasing demand for the explanation of psychic forces.

Bain, Lamarck, Wallace, Darwin, Spencer and Comte (2) are names associated with the newer methods of approach to the subject and the results obtained. The different theories to account for mind structure, reflective processes and affective feelings, need not concern us. Lapsed Intelligence, Associationism, Natural Selection, Acquired Characteristics, and Adjustment, all had their devotees, among names now honored for the contributions made to the subject. The net result, however, was an entirely new emphasis placed upon the unity and continuity of life processes from the lowest to the highest forms. Man was no longer an isolated unit, cast into a sphere of unrelated forces to form what association fortune or inclination disposed. Present forms were seen in the light of accumulated past experiences. Man began life with the bias of inborn tendencies, due to those physical and psychic adjustments of ancestors whose modes of activity were consequent upon reflex actions to changing conditions. Tradition and environment acquired a new meaning, and derived a special prominence in the vocabulary of character formation. This, together with the aid of philosophy, and especially

(1) "Studies in English Literature", Dowden: P.57.

(2) "History of Psychology", Baldwin: P.78, 79.



the Hedonistic ethics of Mill, gave a new form and import to methods of analysis.

The novel as an attempt to portray life in heightened form could not long ignore this emphasis upon the inner control of response to external stimuli. Charlotte Bronte was too closely associated with the earlier movement to give to impassioned action the necessary cohesive analysis. Speaking of the "peculiar play of Charlotte Bronte's imagination", Gates calls it Romantic "in the sense that she makes the world over in terms of intense, personal emotion". (1) Showing the difference between her and George Eliot, he states: "George Eliot never tells of love at first hand, and always puts a mist of philosophizing and a blur of moral suasion between the readers and any passionate tendency she recites. Charlotte Bronte tells of the joy and the terror and tragedy of love and life with the intense directness of the lyric poet." (2) R. H. Hutton, in discussing the same writer and her relation to the new emphasis, states: "There is even an abruptness of outline, and a total want of social cohesion among her characters." (3)

Mrs. Gaskell approaches nearer the point of blending the real with the analytic. "Cranford" had revealed the quality of realism which was her particular forte. In "Ruth", she added the ethical, displaying somewhat extreme types of actuating motives. With Charlotte Bronte, the analysis of ethical motives had been obstructed by the passionate directness of action, and though analysis was implied, it was made subject to the larger purposes. It was not until we come to George Eliot that we have the

(1) "Studies & Appreciations", L.E.Gates: P.168.

(2) Ibid., P.162.

(3) "Essays in Literary Criticism", R.H.Hutton: P.230.

ability to adequately portray the conditions under which specific impulses definitely arise, resulting in definitely controlled modes of activity, these dominated by a formulated ethical code.

Her preparation for the work was extraordinary and special. To native powers of observation was added that wider culture, the result of strenuous study and active literary work on a reflective review. "No novelist of mark", says Leslie Stephen, "ever possessed a wider intellectual culture." (1) She did not simply peruse books; from a child she had been accustomed to devour their contents until they became part of that soul-force which could exercise itself in many spheres. Her nature being of an exquisitely sympathetic trend, with strong genuine emotions, was allied to a large, tolerant intellect which transfigured all experience. The very intensity of the early struggles to find a basis for belief, and a means to express idealism, had increased the perception of the complexity of causes. Always devoted to the strongest ties of affection, with a misgiving regarding excess of passion, she produced those neutral tones in description of men and things which link her with a broader reality. The singular tendency to describe the conflict of emotions led her ingenuity, fused with sympathy, into that delicious world of laughter and tears, both pathetic and appealing. Thus we have the recognition of her special powers, as early as 1860, in the "Quarterly": "George Eliot is able to represent the social circumstances in which her action is laid with the strongest appearance of verisimilitude." (2) This same innate capacity drew her also into that realm where ingenious modes of self-deception unconsciously interpret ethical laws according to convenience or expediency. This is what drew from Professor Blackie of Edinburgh, a letter of gratitude

(1) "George Eliot", Leslie Stephen: P.197.

(2) "Famous Reviews", Johnson: P.377.

for the "novel of the deeper life". (1) It suggested to Scherer the truth, "It was not with her ethics that George Eliot wrote her novels, it was with her psychology; and in this lies the secret of her power;" and farther on in the same article he states: "She is at home with the most secret and the subtlest entanglement of motives." (2)

With regard to the term "psychologic realism", which has been applied to her style, we have two definitions, or rather descriptions. Evolving the principle applied in the case of Mrs. Gaskell's "Ruth", Gross affirms that "The outward sequence of its incidents is the correlative of an inner sequence of thought and feeling, which is brought into harmony with an ethical formula and accounted for in an analysis of motive." (3) This undoubtedly suits the style of "Ruth", but the word "correlative" might have a doubtful meaning if applied to our author's particular method. In the case of Maggie and even Romola, the word "conflict" would have to be substituted, for the outward sequence is often in collision with the inward. A better attempt at explanation is found in Long. In reference to the term used, he says, "This means that George Eliot sought to do in her novels what Browning attempted in his poetry; that is, to represent the inner struggle of a soul, and to reveal the motives, impulses and hereditary influences which govern human action." (4) This, according to my mind, is a truer rendering of a somewhat vague term, and as such determines the line of effort followed in these studies.

In the first three books, the realism is so patent and compelling that there is no need to give a separate treatment. The introduction to each of

(1) "Life & Letters", J.W.Gross: P.328.

(2) "Essays on English Literature", Scherer: P.302.

(3) "Development of the English Novel", W.L.Gross; P.237.

(4) "History of English Literature", Long: P.509.

these three will take in a sufficient survey of the background of nature, both human and physical, to lay out the forces operating within the sphere of the emotions described. From "Silas Marner" on, a separate treatment is required for the realism, owing to the increasing preponderance of the psychological analysis.

The study is not intended to be either exhaustive or extensive. To deal faithfully with any one of her books would form a treatise in itself. Such a treatment would be more of interest from the standpoint of psychology proper, than from the point of view of literature. Hence, only the main characters and situations are followed, for they are the pivot upon which all movement turns, ethical laws operate, and the motive force of all activities.

CHAPTER I."SCENES <sup>6</sup>~~IN~~ CLERICAL LIFE": 1957.

Considered as scenes of intense tragic feeling in apparently uneventful episodes and amid a commonplace environment. Description detailed and elaborate, with a tendency to carry the same process into the realm of emotion.

*of*  
SCENES ~~FROM~~ CLERICAL LIFE: 1857.

AMOS BARTON.

This first "Scene" bears out the intention of our author to give a "sympathetic rendering of common life". (1) So well known were the places that she revelled in the portrayal. Their early "quaintness" produced that charm which lends enchantment to earlier incident and bygone days. With true aesthetic appreciation she cast the same spell over her readers, until the countryside became touched with the idyllic beauty of Arcady. Character analysis, however, suffers. There is wit, humor, pathos, and elaborate description, but the episode is hardly sufficient to demand exceptional psychic force. Amos is too much akin to the slowly moving and slowly changing country life to experience crises in his reflective processes. One crisis arises in his emotions, and that evolves the climax.

An extensive variety of types cannot be expected in a pastoral scene like Shepperton. The Pattons, Gibbs and Hackitts are the products of hereditary forces, embodying all the traditions of partial isolation. Inherited custom has become the medium in which their lives are expressed, and ideas handed down are held with all the tenacity of religious purpose. They react to the blundering innovations of their pastor with all the suspicion of their stolid caste. Desires created by the simple environment are few and easily met, and the general sufficiency strengthens the permanency of existing institutions. Social standing, morals and the church being a part of their inherited traditions strengthened the instinctive impulse to maintain them as necessities of living. Even the epigrammatic Mrs. Hackitt, of whose poignant tongue Mr. Pilgrim, the doctor, stood in awe, seemed a natural part of this bucolic society.

(1) "Development of English Novel", Gross: P.239.



The story centering amid these scenes appears as much a mathematical as a psychological problem. How a family of eight lived in decent poverty on eighty pounds a year, until the entrance of another figure eliminated one of the main factors, is the problem.

All the ills of the story are caused by heredity. Amos was that type of blundering inefficiency that had missed its calling. Endowed with a belief in his own strength, he felt himself weak; he had the opinion, not the sensation. A derivative of the Independents, he would have made a good cabinet-maker, and might have breathed out faulty rhetoric in fervid prayer-meetings, but the eclectic atmosphere of Cambridge had given a bias to his moral gravity in the direction of the Establishment. He was now a member of the cloth, set to be a burning and shining light amid a benighted flock, a cure of souls, and a bulwark against those forms of evil in the shape of Dissent and moral delinquency. His profession supplied dignity to his motives which his qualities betrayed. He was "a man whose virtues were not heroic, and who had no understood crime within his breast; who had not the slightest mystery hanging over him, but was palpably and unmistakably commonplace; who was not even in love, but had had that complaint favorably many years ago." (1)

Obligations of the priestly office furnished a sense of duty, to which Amos responded with sincerity. He even exceeded his duties with extra free services at the Workhouse and the formation of a Tract Society in the Parish. But a sense of one's own personal value is difficult with the prestige of office in village society, and the result was Amos fell a victim to his supposed wisdom. That which he regarded in himself as shrewdness and energy, Pilgrim styled "low-bred" (2), and Mrs. Hackitt estimated "a passil of nonsense". (3) The

(1) Edition, P. 37.

(2) Ibid, P.7.

(3) Ibid, P.6.

whole situation would be deliciously grotesque were it not for the tragedy woven into the life of his beautiful wife Milly. She had developed habits of meekness and resignation within the restrictive sphere of married life. Amos reacted to her loving devotion with a careless indifference born of familiarity in a shallow nature. The parish was his arena for conquest, home the place of comfort and exercise of parental authority. He shared the poverty as a part of the sacrifice, but failed to sense the suffering his gentle wife was silently enduring. Her one stray desire for pretty dresses is not allowed to become a motive, but loses its strength in the passivity of obedience to simple duties.

The elemental weakness in Amos falling for the effusive and fulsome flattery of the Countess, as John Blackwood says, "disposed one to kick him". (1) An adventuress with a touch of the spectacular, she is not beneath sponging also. Her idle, selfish, shallow and ambitious nature reflects only the "asinine stupidity" (2) of Amos in allowing her imposition on an already overburdened home. This blunder in his home was the correlation of those within his parish. He lacked imagination to perceive consequences, and the very sincerity of his intention did not fail to bring him into collision with his environment. Motives arising from social sympathies are usually not the basis of interpretation for such conduct as taking a belated Countess into your home. As a result in acquiescence to duty, the world of emotion crashed around him.

The calamity of Milly's death appealed to their better sympathies: "Amos failed to touch the spring of goodness by his sermons, but he touched it effectively by his sorrows; and there was now a real bond between him and his flock." (3) Thus George Eliot reaches the climax of the soul-force in the episode - the intuitive emotions which may have to be roused by sufferings from the ground

(1) "Life & Letters", Gross: P.214.

(2) Ibid, P.214.

(3) Edition, P.67.

of real sympathy in which the social being finds its best expression, and the impulse to helpfulness its most effective exercise.

MR. GILFIL'S LOVE STORY.

This "Scene" reverses the process. The tragic event which had reshaped life took place at the beginning of his career. Our author pictures him after the loose ends had either worn away or gathered up again into the thread of existence. A man with scanty white hairs, of caustic tongue, bucolic tastes and sparing habits scarcely above those of his parishioners, whose early passionate heart and tenderness had grown into apathetic content or unexpectant acquiescence. For thirty years the priestly function had been gathering the sanctions of life around his personality. His sermons had long lost the throb of pulsating hope, and now were simply moral truisms constantly repeated. But his easy speech and familiar manners made him more popular at christening dinners and parish affairs than in the pulpit. His life was woven into the warp and woof of Shepperton traditions. To those who knew, he was a shrunken remnant and an unfinished romance, in which "the drama of hope and love has long ago reached its catastrophe, and left the poor soul like a dim and dusty stage, with all its sweet garden scenes and fair perspectives overturned and thrust out of sight". (1)

The episode gives us a glimpse into that "visible symbol of the secret chamber in the heart, where he had long turned the key on early hopes and early sorrows, shutting up forever all the passion and poetry of his life". (2) Cheverel Manor, that "castellated house of tinted stone", "mullioned windows" and "flanking towers", supplies the historic setting for a mediaeval romance. Sir Christopher's architectural designs toward the Gothic keep us amid the moderns. His noble bearing, reliability upon inherited powers, and plans which could never go astray, suggest an embodiment of cultured authority. He is part of that hereditary atmosphere of

(1) Edition, P. 79.

(2) Ibid, P. 81.

durability, impressiveness, aristocratic honor, and chivalry. Lady Cheverel is a modification of the same haughty forces which submitted with grace and dignity only to her husband's personality. George Eliot gives us a glimpse into his imperative habits transformed by generosity in the case of the Widow Hartropp's impassioned plea.

The real psychic force that sets itself against inherited strength lay in Caterina of "large eyes, which in their inexpressive, unconscious beauty, ~~re-~~ resemble the fawn", and with the "southern yellowish tint of her small neck and face". (1) She was given an heredity by placing her birth associations in Italy, where her benefactors had, from impulsive generosity, taken her under their care. As the daughter of an unfortunate opera singer and music copyist, she had inherited a fine voice and the soul of a singer, which expressed more of itself in song than in any other form. A meek, timid creature, sensitive to the slightest twinge of emotion, there yet ran in her veins the richer blood of the South, which poured forth the exotic passions of her race. Impulsive in all her affections, she loved and hated with impetuosity.

To the placid, honorable Gilfil, she became the object of desire, the symbol of emotion, and the spring of generous action. To Captain Wybrow, the light, vivacious, dutiful adopted heir of the Cheverel household, she became a more object of fancy and victim of sport,-- a pretty thing, you couldn't help becoming infatuated with. She responded to his condescending flirtation with all the ardor of her Southern temperament. When Wybrow brought his chosen bride in the person of the sedate, family-conscious Miss Assher, it reacted in Caterina with all the anger and jealousy of her emotional nature. His pliant affections still hovered around until compromising situations drove Miss Assher into haughty jealousy.

(1) Edition, P. 83.

In Caterina, the emotional crisis could be relieved only by a walk in the wet grass, and under unfriendly skies, on evasive pleas to Mr. Bates. The overwrought impulse subsided with the exercise to better judgment of reflection. But lack of some definite interest-bearing occupation, however, caused sleeping emotions to gather strength. In the very songs she poured her soul's affection, and all unconsciously effected a stronger appeal to Wybrow's unreflective sentiment.

The cold, calmer, Northern temperament of Miss Assher responded to "reason". She could pity the apparently foolish emotionalism of the Italian waif, until the hauteur of her supercilious frown galled Caterina to desperation. This timid, sensitive soul under accentuated impulse was forced into the gallery scene with all its tragedy and mystery. The shock of Wybrow's death disorganized the impulse and reacted with mental distraction, resulting in nervous reaction and physical lassitude ending in a swoon.

Gilfil, the representative of self-renunciation, with moral impulse well under the control of reflective power, acts not only on the instinct to help the needy in distress, but affection for the victim. From this time on we have presented in detail how the exhausted, emotional primary instinct for destruction drives Caterina to seek other resources along an environment where the possibility of resurgence will be remote. Earlier associations supply the incentive, and the shattered faculties are reorganized by the effort to meet the instinct for existence. She could not contemplate suicide; she was not of heroic temper. The destructive impulse was directed at that which violated the complete surrender of her warm affections. When that was useless, the meek, submissive nature was lost in passivity. But the dagger, the symbol of her irrational impulse, was missing, and to her weakened physical and mental condition, its conjurations drove her to despair. When Gilfil at Callum dispels



that fear by telling her that he had discovered it and replaced it in the cabinet, the obstacle to her restoration was removed.

At Mrs. Herron's, Caterina's recovery was slow, scarcely beyond placidity and acquiescence,- "a quiet, grateful smile, compliance,- and an increasing consciousness". (1) The stimulus needed came not from Gilfil, but from a chance movement along the line of inherited impulse,- her soul for music. By the touch of a harpsichord an active power was awakened, and made a new epoch in Caterina's recovery.

The gradual acquirement of significance in Gilfil's ideal affection, with her acquiescent response, is along the line followed out with Adam and Dinah, except that the frail nature was too weak to stand the strain of life, and the early, sad death follows. The tragedy chastened Gilfil's hopes, strengthened his purposes, and deepened his hold upon these experiences in which all are akin. It formed the fount of his inspirations and his benediction, for "finest hope is finest memory".

(1) Edition, P.181.

JANET'S REPENTANCE.

By the time the third and last "Scene" was complete, our author had brought her ethical formula more under control and her psychology more in accordance with it. The other elaborately described Scenes had not given that gradual evolution of character famous in later writings. She adapts the catastrophe here, bringing characters face to face with congenital tendencies. But there is progress in the gradual subjection of native faculty for describing to the increasing influence of incident and dialogue. The former stories were mere episodes resulting in fragrant memories. Here the realism is assisted by creative imagination to evolve character around historic movements and personages. Like the others before, the setting was well known to our author, and memory plays its part in reviving all the details in time and place, but the more definite adjustments bring motive and the consequences of modes of activity into greater prominence.

This is especially true with the religious motive strong in this story. The nobler impulses which lead to self-sacrificing activity and asceticism are accounted for more on the place of actual fellow-sympathy, than by the agency of supersensuous force. States of the mind are emphasized which suggest the strength of motives leading to beneficent activity in some, and in redeeming qualities in others, while in those showing moral degradation, the external events correspond to the internal feelings, and these arise from the lower animal instincts. Hence, though persons and events are all within the realm of the probable, yet choice and selection, with the elaborate explanation of forces at work impress one for the first time in her writings of dominant views gradually shaping into definite purpose.

In a letter regarding criticism on this story, George Eliot stated her purpose was to represent the conflict between not two different forces of religion, but "irreligion and religion". (1) The epithets "Tryanites" and "Anti-Tryanites" give the meaning to the two movements. Dempster's name is the synonym for leadership of the "Anti's", and his the creative spirit in its activities.

In the appearance and habits of any character described by our author, the reader can always estimate the quality of his motives. A massive man, with head hanging forward, puffy cheeks, protruding lipless mouth, and a snuffy nose, this, together with a rasping, oratorical voice, and you have the physiognomy of a man who, never looking anyone in the eyes, does not reveal his real purpose in his determinate energy. Opposition at the Red Lion causes him to react with the brow-beating bluster, marking conquest, rather than a desire for correct information. He is easily seen to be the central figure of the group. The Budd and Tomlinson types act under his suggestion, and are little more than the medium of his railroading ingenuity. The motives that impelled him into active opposition to the "Evangelical cant" lay along the same low place in which he suppressed all other forms distasteful to him. Powers of language and thought aided his plausible arguments, but his methods were of the brute, and showed the strength of brute instincts in his nature.

In an uncritical society, success in business had passed for sanction of habits, but his clients relied more on that success than upon his scruples. The kind he gloried in was seen in his stimulus to the mob instinct, acting under suggestion from carefully prepared placard signs when he returned victorious with the "deputation". (2) Jerome testified to his sincere motives

(1) "Life & Letters", Cross: P.233.

(2) Edition, Chap. IV.

as a young lawyer starting in business, but our author appears to have a poor trust upon the law environment as a "ticklish business", judging by its representatives in her books. But in the same way he treated his wife, obediently passive, but with sufficient emotion to hang on a chance favor. When he acted on nobler impulse and seemed himself for a while, he bore out to "Mamsy" all his complaint against his childless home as the cause of his brutality. But "he had become callow in worldliness, fevered by sensuality, enslaved by chance impulse" (1), degraded still more by brandy-and-water potations, which lessened his moral sensibility and flamed his passions.

Judgment vitiated by the excess of animal passion soon associated business troubles with his enemies' influence, and increased the feelings of hatred toward them. Brutal treatment of his wife was the correlative of accentuated instinctive tendencies. His violent death appears as Nature's retributive demands to a nature controlled by the lowest form of unsocial selfishness.

A direct psychological contrast was Tryan, the curate at the chapel-at-on Paddiford Common. The story of the new controlling impulse was told in a confession to Janet, when her motives were in a state of derangement, and her faculties had lost their hold on life's relationship. From feelings of remorse at the sight of another's suffering caused by himself, had arisen the impulse toward self-denying activity for suffering humanity. He styled it religious fervor, and it expressed itself in a desire to tread the thorniest road and endure the cruellest cross, if only some redeeming work could be done. Thus his life was spent among the colliers of his parish in works of charity and helpfulness.

His life is not given the heroic cast. Religious bias did not christen

(1) Edition, P.285.

opposition persecution, or reveal a martyr's ardor, which is not incompatible with primary egoism. Though his zeal could not flinch from provoking hatred and ridicule, it caused his sensitive nature acute suffering. Every form of disapproval jarred him painfully, and though he fronted his opponents with all the strength of a higher moral purpose, at times with warmth of temper, "he had no pugnacious pleasure in the contest". Our author explains the process as the choice of an environment at conflict with his lower self, in the struggle with which he could develop the highest social sympathies. Thus he was sincere in responding with gratitude to the cordial words from the staunch old Jerome.

The treatment of the effect upon Milby society from the Evangelical efforts of Tryan reveal a wonderful power of observation. Some had gained modes of speech, but remained unchanged in habits,-- "a religious vocabulary rather than "a religious experience". (1) Some had been made a "more complex nuisance", by increasing emotional fervor, glozing a slattern appearance. In the Bible-reading, family prayer, and memories crammed with religious phrases, "folly often mistook itself for wisdom, ignorance gave itself airs of knowledge, and selfishness, turning its eyes upward, called itself religion".

Its better aspect was seen in the inculcation into the Milby mind of a sterner sense of duty to be lived out in daily life with the mind kept upon a "beyond", and this moulded on a new faith, raised the self to a higher order of experience, and supplied "a principle of subordination of self-mastery into human nature". (2) Resulting in the truth that man "is no longer a mere bundle of impressions, desires and impulses", it lifted them to the source of goodness.

Tryan is placed by our author among the real heroes whose "insight is blended with mere opinion; their sympathy is perhaps confined in narrow conduits of (3)

(1) Edition, P. 254.

(2) Ibid, P. 254.

(3) Ibid, P. 251.

doctrine, instead of flowing forth with the freedom that blesses every weed in its course". "They had won a few truths by long wrestling with their own sins and sorrows; they have earned faith and strength so far as they have done genuine work." In this way all his motives come before the bar of a genuine human sympathy; and the best expression of this his life impulse appeared in stimulating and strengthening the response of the highest self in Janet. The result was an intuitive feeling of social service.

Evolution of character is best portrayed in Janet, for she changes from one set of impulses to the opposite. Disillusioned in her husband and fearing him, imbibed prejudices are strong enough for her to endorse his attitude to the Evangelical cant. She even assists in pouring hatred and scorn upon it, in the name of all the good that dear old Mr. and Mrs. Grewe meant to her. Chance acquaintance with Tryan does not affect her because of established sympathies with her husband. But her deeply emotional nature, longing for the real symbols of love, gradually becomes bruised and battered, until open antagonism and defiance record the disgust in her feelings against the man whose name she has taken. Associations for real social fellowship are brought about through her misery. At Mrs. Pettifer's, Tryan becomes to her all the embodiment of the noblest in man. Admiration and longing for the strength of mind he possesses touch resources for renewed hopes, and to the inspiration from that higher nature, she responds with impulse to the better life. No wonder her enfeebled motives rely upon the strength of his association, but her newly-acquired meaning of life finds its strength at the bedside of her dying husband.

In the sudden and accidental discovery after his death of a bottle of brandy,-- the symbol of old temptation,-- we have the stimulus reviving an old vein of activity. It produces for a time a paroxysm of impulse, to which will-power almost succumbs. But better resolution prevails, and control is revived by



recalling earlier experiences with resultant joy or peace. It is, however, upon the trust she reposes in her guide and instructor that she relies for conservation of her better life. She finds sustainance to resolution in healthy occupation, goodwill of friends, and in the spontaneous impulse to works of social good; in resources within herself and environment, and not anything beyond. Thus George Eliot is coming nearer to her views in explanation of religious forces.

After Tryan's death, his best monument is in Janet Dempster, craving no selfish good, meek and resigned to the tasks about her,-- "rescued from self-despair, strengthened with divine hopes, and now looking back on years of purity and helpful labor". (1) Hence we have in Janet's history the complete change of habits operating in the realm of the moral impulse, in the direction of the larger social life and producing feelings of satisfaction as their own reward.

(1) Edition, P.339.

CHAPTER II.

"ADAM BEDE;" 1859.

A study of situations of strong emotional crises reflecting idealistic choice in some and unreflective passion in others. Heredity and tradition beginning to play a part in the shaping of moral impulse. Emotion and volition brought under an ethical formula now appearing as an irreversible natural law. Artistic treatment of the scenic background adds a touch of realism to persons and events.

ADAM BEDE: 1859.

Together with the "Scenes" and "Silas Marner", George Eliot here has kept her psychological tendencies subject to the principles of her art. No small measure of its success was due to the perfect balance maintained throughout. The laborious method of character analysis is never allowed to obtrude the natural simplicity of the stolid country folk. Provincial ways and accents are described with such accuracy that readers cannot help but be conscious of the perfect naturalness of character. They are real men and women, in a background where they harmonize completely, appearing as the product of its native forces. The realism cannot be questioned, for not until toward the end of the book does there appear that trait common to other efforts of our author, to linger over familiar scenes and lives grown to fruition in her imagination.

Early association had formed the medium for the knowledge developed into "organized experiences", enunciated by Lewes in the form of intuition. From this resource all the force of this subject is drawn. Memory supplied the tone and color, but intuitive power gave that life-giving energy, vibrant in every page of the narrative. It is not necessary to discover how much is the product of memory. We accept our author's word that old associations, and early deep-rooted fervor, together with fragments of conversation, helped to revive images of the past and form definite conceptions of its life. But even the most tenacious observation could not fill in the picture without the aid of vivifying imagination and creative skill. It is to this that we owe the sustained power of the narrative, its humor and pathos which maintain interest to the end, even though unity is lacking in the plot.

The canvas is somewhat crowded with persons and incidents, and hardly sufficient to present a life lived with intensity, certainly not sufficient for an epic career. Perhaps it is owing to these limited possibilities of village life that we have interest centred more in situations than in striking personages. One heroic person would soon have reached the limits of such a circumscribed environment. Hence heroism is spread over several characters, until the very title of the book may mislead the reader in believing in a particular rather than a general treatment. As a result of this, it would be of small value to follow each of the leading figures through the various scenes. It is really a study in the psychology of situation, rather than in individual character; all the persons contributing by their reactions to the general mood presented in each particular happening.

The first two scenes, the workshop and the village preaching, touch the forces which operate all through the book. The characters are types of village life embodying various reactions. The workshop depicts those hereditary influences which play such a part in an old established country society with a reflex of new tendencies. The sons have followed the father's calling, receiving their training at his expert hands, and revealing the characteristic thoroughness of his expert skill, with the traditions of a trade handed down through generations of honest effort after a livelihood. Adam and Seth are presented as a contrast, more in temperament than in physique. Both have reached manhood, with established habits of industry and sobriety. Ideals of honesty, genuineness and sincerity are common to both, and carried out in everyday activities. Adam is the representative of intellectual Celtic and Saxon peasant mixture, practical in viewpoint, showing will-power to the point of determination. The mechanical tendency of his nature had found a stimulus in the night school, and reacted within its limited medium with definite workable principles of life.

Things around him embody the spiritual. God and religion must be interpreted in the light of the sum total of life's activities. He sees God "i' the great works and inventions, and i' the figuring and the mechanics". (1) The impulse to work by the clock is beneath him, for labor is a challenge to all his soul forces. Demands of the family love modified his self directed energy. Though resenting the weakness of his father, and at times impatient and even blunt with his mother's wailing querulousness, his feelings have been brought through a form of sentiment into a genuine sympathy pervading his general behavior.

Seth possesses most of the simpler traits of his brother, but not quite so pronounced. The mysticism in his nature, reacting to the stimulus of a fervid religion, had evolved those softer fibres of emotion upon which the harmonies of the universe could play. To his fellows he was a "woolgatherer", but his abstractions simply marked the response of intuitive emotions, in a form of other-worldliness. His was a more resigned nature than Adam's, owing to the moral impulse accentuated by the submissive element in his religion. If to Adam, work was a religion, to Seth, religion was a work, and a life to be lived with reality and intensity. Both are the product of hereditary forces, clinging to home and kindred with their life roots, and finding their nourishment in the relations of a society in which each had his particular interest.

In the incident of the village preaching, we have a new motive force entering a traditional environment. It is the picture of an intense religious stimulus acting along the lines of what George Eliot recognizes as spiritual emotion. Dinah is its embodiment. Her imagination and sensitized emotional nature had made that form of religion a vital element in her everyday life and its world relations. It supplied that need for intensity and expansiveness in a life pulsating with passionate longings. A continual stream of emotional fervor makes

(1) Edition, P. 6.

her a dramatic figure in the situation. Life is represented to her in terms of duties done with delight, and sacrifices compensating with heart ease. As a result tasks apparently incongruous to a woman appealed to her vitalized imagination with the coercive stimulus of a call from God.

In delineating Dinah, however, our author has preserved her from the usual aberration of such an intense fervor. Consequently in the passionate ardor of her religious zeal, dominated by a susceptibility to see everything in the light of a higher control, we never lose our respect for her; she keeps her interests distinctly within the social needs of men and women. Hence, the sermon she delivers to those stolid villagers after the day's work is complete and the evening meal partaken, appears as an attempt to resurge a new life force through an impassable medium.

It has its effects, however, and they can be easily traced. Dinah in speaking recreates that world of imagery by emphasis upon the pathos of her subject. The effect upon herself is the first important reaction. She arouses her own feelings to such intensity that they radiate emotion to her hearers, who react with the reverence born of inherited respect for the subject. Bess Cranage is a type of that reaction in a bucolic mind. At first her attention is drawn to the speaker's appearance, centering round a comparison of simplicity with gaudiness. Then the general gravity affects her shallow temperament, making her more responsive to the emotional appeal. Dinah's definite fixing of attention upon those associations in Bessie's life which fed her vanity, impressed her with a sense of something wrong, and upon the impulse of contagious emotion, she reacted along the line of suggested activity. The majority, however, were unaffected as far as radical change was concerned. In an old established village like Hayslope, inherited traditions and customs on which forbears had thrived, were too firmly entrenched in the scheme of things



to be discarded, or even challenged by emotional stimulus that carried no prestige of inherited authority.

What it failed to do to any extent in Hayslope, however, George Eliot states that the "unpremeditated eloquence" falling from hundreds of lips of "venerating love" (1) did accomplish in cities and towns where laborious industry stultified the lives of its victims. To them faith became "a rudimentary culture, which linked their thoughts with the past, lifted their imaginations above the sordid details of their narrow lives, and suffused their souls with the sense of a pitying, loving, infinite Presence, sweet as a summer to the houseless needy". Thus it performed a function of establishing traditions and providing a fellowship in which the social feelings might grow among a class of people who were isolated units, the result of the artificial activity of blighting manufactures.

The sudden death by drowning of Thias Bede accentuates the characters of those affected. Its peculiar associations supplied the stimulus to the peasant nature of the stalwart Adam. His credulous nature responded with superstition to the mysterious rapping at the door during the night. The inherited simplicity of his emotions which forms the basis of half life's dread contributed to the depth of his reverence for the mystery of existence. At the same time it formed the contrast in his nature to the penetrating power of his mind and the fearlessness with which he backed his moral principles.

Mr. Irwine, the rector, is a part of that environment in which Adam and Dinah lived. He appeared as a typical classic culture, fused with moral impulse. His policy in the domain in which he held ecclesiastical and magisterial authority was "live and let live". One cannot help but feel something of George Eliot's appreciation for his type as a beneficent factor in his sphere. He generously

(1) Edition, P.37.

recognizes the "sweetness and light" distilled by such a personality as Dinah's and refuses to cast any reproach upon the path of such spiritual activity. He was "one of those large-hearted, sweet-blooded natures that never know a narrow or grudging thought, - epicurean, - with no enthusiasm, no self-scourging sense of duty; but yet -- of sufficiently subtle moral fibre to have an unwearying tenderness for obscure and monotonous suffering". (1) The heroism of his character is brought out later on in his relation to Arthur and Adam, strengthening the one, and tempering the iron in the soul of the other.

Dinah's life was a conflict within the realm of choice. Her motives were on a higher plane, evolving the better self, for she placed the lower appeals in the light of the higher purposes. But with Hetty Sorrel, the conflict was the result of inherited tendencies. It was a collision between overpowering cravings for the vain and trifling, where she might shine as a gilded butterfly, and her real uninteresting and unremitting sordid lot, which allowed no hope for conscious desires. Drudgery will either repress or drive such longings to excess in less desirable traits. In Hetty, the secret and surreptitious revels of her imagination before the mirror in her own room correspond to the soliloquies in a play of dramatic force, revealing the hidden forces of wants arising from conflicting impulses. Her environment grated upon her very instincts, and allowed only the most dangerous because the most frivolous expression to her vanities. These she used with Cinderella-like naivete. Poor, ignorant, and proud of her "kitten-like prettiness", her will power became the slave of a world of imagery in contrast to her meagre home life. "Her dreams were all of luxuries; to sit in a carpeted parlor, and always wear white stockings; to have some large beautiful earrings such as were all the fashion; to have Nottingham lace round the top of her gown, or something to make her handkerchief smell nice, like Miss Lydia Donnithorne's

(1) Edition, P. 71.

when she drew it out at church; and not to be obliged to get up early or scolded by anybody. She thought if Adam had been rich and could give her these things, she loved him well enough to marry him." (1) But the strong, stalwart Adam could appeal with all the force of moral manhood without the tremor of her eyelids; the handsome, good, but light-hearted and trifling Arthur with all his perquisites could thrill with a glance. Hetty's passion to escape the trammels of her lot were only strengthened by the reproachful humor of Mrs. Poyser, and in the plastic form of conflicting impulse, she fell a prey to desire, uncontrolled by reflection.

Hetty is the real psychological problem of the story. She is the one to whom collision brings tragedy, and through whom all the other personages are influenced to reactions for better or worse. All the incidents from this time on are the product of her actions, for she becomes the moving spirit of the main plot. The story of Adam derives interest from incidents associated with her. Arthur Donnithorne is a young man who would have graced his day and generation with chivalrous conduct, but it is Hetty who touches the deeper currents of his life and brings them into contact with universal streams. The Poyser with all their bovine contentment, were simply prosperous farmers, honest and upright, much like the rest of the countryside. Hetty raises them to the stage of moral problems, and thrusts them into the maelstrom. Mrs. Poyser's poignant and racy wit could "stock the countryside with proverbs", but no small number arose with Hetty as the reaction agent.

Dinah in the stricken home, attempting to comfort the "anxious, spare, but vigorous old woman", now brooding in querulous grief, is one of the best instances of real native psychology. Without any apparent calculation toward

(1) Edition, P.107.

effect, Dinah adapts herself to the atmosphere of the situation, and begins along the plane of common desires. To Lisbeth everything had "got a taste of sorrow in it", and her unresourceful life longs to be with her husband in death. Dinah is not disheartened. Through the medium of sympathy she found her way to common feelings. By means of her own life story, Lisbeth's social sympathies were aroused and led beyond present emotions. Tidiness in the home was the next move, for Dinah saw the influence of a sense of order and quietude. Prayer, that reorganizer of human forces, next disposed Lisbeth to place her troubles more in the light of universal relations. From this on her hopes were led out to become a consolation to her soul.

Where had Dinah got her knowledge of the highways of psychic force, but in the "varied experiences among the mourning, among minds hardened and shrivelled through poverty and ignorance, and had gained the subtlest perceptions of the mode in which they could be touched and softened into willingness to receive words of spiritual consolation or warning". (1) She was able to use the same native skill in a sadder scene later on, and as completely successful in touching the fibres of a human soul in misery.

The fight in the wood was really the physical collision to relieve the pent-up forces in active minds. For Arthur the compromising situation in which Adam had discovered him, was the last of a process. It had begun as a trivial fancy aided by impulse strengthened by the simple incident of a lame horse. This had prevented him from going fishing according to determination. Hence play was allowed for the strategem of passion to sham a retreat, even while decision was against any such misdemeanor. The very generosity of his feelings was the weakness in which unstemmed desire developed its force. The mind began to apologize for the passions, weaving objective directions into mere circumstances.

(1) Edition, P.

The soft, fluffy prettiness of Hetty had distracted him, and found in the lack of moral impulse a means to his own degradation.

Infatuation rarely ever calls forth the manly qualities. It usually weakens will power by the force of created desires becoming all-controlling impulses. In Arthur the process was followed out fairly minutely, at least enough to trace the changes that resulted. He wrestled with himself in the form of lower passions, sought to gather strength even from the staunch old oaks that lined the grove; he decided on all sorts of subterfuges to take the place of clear moral action, but his dependence even upon his honor as a gentleman could not substitute clear assertive will-power dallying with the symbol of all desire. The heroic in his nature could not be called into being along the primrose path; it had to come along via dolorosa.

In the case of Adam, the passivity of his affections had made him appear docile. In the case of rights or duties his nature was assertive, at times even to carelessness of others' feelings. But all the accumulated strength of his passion for Hetty could not make him test the ordeal of possible repression. He loved in apparent silence, though at the Hall Farm he was accorded the prestige of the accepted lover. Yet in company with Hetty his emotional timidity dare not assume that relation. The force of his antagonism to Arthur in the wood was that of nourished but repressed affection, for we hate in proportion to our loves. He had stemmed the current of his feelings, while the symbol of emotion remained irresponsive. But with violation to the object of his devotion, the force of affection became a jam of suppressed passions for revenge, and finally burst the barrier of social and economic rights.

The explosion of Adam's wrath, however, placed Arthur's trivial flirtation in a new light; it led Arthur deeper in the loss of his self-respect. Hitherto he had lied only to himself, now he took in humanity in lying to Adam. Anger spent

and Arthur fainting, better feelings awoke in Adam, and he saw his aggressive pugnacity in the light of vindictive revenge. He is true to himself in acting generously, but his credulity failed to discover any other motive than his own, resulting in weakness, arising from recognition of Arthur's side, rather than the claims of his own affection. The clash had roused deep-rooted animal instincts in both, but reconciliation had preserved for the time being the duplicity in Arthur. From this time on, however, Adam with the impetus gathered by the very assertion of physical force, more aggressively sought Hetty's company, with success. But again his blind affection was made the refuge for despair. He became the passive victim of consequences at which even Arthur shuddered.

Hetty's wanderings are stages of desperation brought on by increasing degradation. She had no moral force on which to depend. Her light, vivacious, frivolous nature became saddened by gloom of approaching disaster, and she eventually dragged all down with her. She becomes an object of pity, and as one reads the story of her blind response to impulse directed to safety, one cannot help but feel the force of our author's analysis.

The shock of revelation of Hetty's guilt disorganized Adam's force of habitual self-control. His mind, inexperienced with disasters, naturally trusty and simple in belief, failed to grasp actualities. He felt in the hope arising out of his simple trust, that it was all a mistake, but the jail scene forced upon his consciousness its realization of the truth into relationship with himself. On poor benighted Hetty, without the faculty of ascertaining the far-reaching consequences, the blow of guilt fell with benumbing force. It closed all the avenues of her being except one, and that was left for Dinah to find. Unaccustomed to the ways of life, her dream world shattered, her hopes lost, her most native instincts had ceased to function. The self-centred sphere of all her dreams prevented her from realizing any sane method of conducting herself in



accordance with the acquirements of human nature. Her motives had become mere blind impulses, and had landed her within the arm of the law, in those days a vulture.

Both Mr. Irwine and Bartle Massey rise to their noblest impulses and each seeks within his own capacity to alleviate the ills of distress. But both are limited by the environment created by moral delinquency in others, and the ever-widening circle of consequences from isolated acts. Mr. Irwine reacts with all the heroism of his nature. He is the sane, commonsense element, that preserves stability. He tempers the heated passions for revenge in Adam by the appeal of reason to the futility of such a course, and the assurance that Nemesis will fall on Arthur. Bartle Massey's loving care for his old scholar touches a vein of refining sentiment which mitigates a great deal of his cynicism.

It is Dinah, however, with her inborn sympathies, that finds a way to the heart of all. The drama within the jail is a natural process in the sense that we would expect Hetty to unburden her soul to Dinah, if to anyone at all. But it does not detract from the effectiveness of Dinah's social sympathies and points the way to the ideal strength of her personality. By a psychological appeal as touching<sup>a</sup> that by which she won Lisbeth, she relieved the emotion of both Hetty and Adam, making a scene of forgiveness possible. The weak nature of Hetty clings tenaciously to the source of strength in Dinah, even to the moment of reprieve, and through her Hetty drew upon resources of which she had hardly been aware before.

Arthur's eleventh-hour reaction restores him again from villainry by revealing that the source of manhood remained clear and strong. He was willing as far as possible to share the dishonor he had created, though he was powerless to relieve the suffering, or in any real manner to atone for the "wrong which never

never be made up for". (1) His genuine efforts at restoration, with absence during the years that followed, endeavors to tone down his crime a little and prepares us for the final stage of the plot.

Of this last stage much need not be said. It is the process of bringing together the two forces with which the book commences in apparent antagonism. The realism is found only in the author's deliberate purpose to relieve the tragic ending, and causes some strain on the probabilities. One hates to think Adam deceived in first love, or that his affection was the Orsino transferable variety, fixing on the object that fell within the realm of inclination. I would rather seek for the solution in the reason suggested by the psychology of forces, that Adam's practical nature with its emphasis upon social relationships, and the divine immanence in the everyday world, could seek unity with Dinah's transcendental otherworldliness. The ending would suggest that our author blends the two views into perfect harmony without the loss of any real force in either, but one cannot help but feel that Dinah's "after-glow"<sup>(2)</sup> of religious fervor, which believed in a real Presence, real spirit control, real miracles and a real devil, somewhat fades into the nebula of social mediocrity.

(1) Edition, P.588.

(2) Ibid, P.37.

CHAPTER III."MILL ON THE FLOSS": 1860.

A study of adolescent psychology. The struggle for ideals produces a conflict between inherited tendencies and social environment. A background of rustic simplicity and provincial oddities adds a scenic element to the realistic observations.

THE MILL ON THE FLOSS: 1860.

"Under the guidance of Hardy, of Verge, and of Tolstoi, we are coming to feel that the noblest art, because the most sincere, is that which reveals the free movement of elemental human passions in the large simplicity of the lives of the poor." (1) In these words Scudder, in "Social Ideals in English Letters", places George Eliot as one of the chief creators of that art which has a way of springing from childish memories. From them have arisen those subjects which taste and imagination have clothed with intrinsic beauty. Circumstances most lowly and lives most unpretentious have been invested with pathos, color and charm. Thoughts almost too deep for expression, and passions almost too aboriginal for portrayal are surrounded with that mild-eyed humor which robs them of their *animus*. At the same time, with increasing skill in choice and construction, we have from that repository of impressions, things "new and old" arranged to touch the springs of spontaneity, and present the true aesthetic appeal. The product belongs to those "earlier books", which carry her native power to its highest achievement, well attested by the popularity it richly deserved.

This is the first time our author had entered the domain of adolescent psychology. With her it was keen insight combined with introspective analytical power, drawing upon the well-stocked storehouse of memory. In the children of the book, which are really the main figures, she covers the whole range of psychic development. The treatment is from a somewhat mature standpoint, which at times strains the realism. She follows out the process of child-life into manhood and womanhood with judgments that reflect experience

(1) "Social Ideals in English Letters", Scudder: P.84.

and design. Powers of thought and expression, of which the young are only dimly conscious, are here dealt with as if fully enunciated in the minds of those under consideration, and feelings naive at that age, receive pronouncement as if definitely related in social life. With it all, however, the innocence and simplicity of youthful impulse and emotion are restrained by artistic power within the realm of the probable. We feel in reading that Maggie, Tom and Lucy are real children, living their own lives within the limits of their own particular environment.

"Tom was painted with the same pity and love as Maggie", (1) says George Eliot in a letter to Blackwood regarding criticism in the "Times". But it is to Maggie that we are drawn, for we feel that we never should have known Tom but for the tragedy of his sister's life. Both display early instinctive movements; in both through the early years impulses reveal strength and direction; but it is in Maggie that those ideals emerge as a result of mysticism in her nature, and which evolve the conflict in her career. Tom is the commoner type of the east of Adam Bede, while Maggie is the early history of a Dorothea, a feminine Deronda, or a Romola.

"The Dodsons' family were a very proud race, and their pride lay in the utter frustration of all desire to tax them with a breach of traditional duty or propriety." (2) It was a pride which "identified honor with perfect integrity, thoroughness of work, and faithfulness to admitted rules". (3) "The family badge was to be honest and rich, and not only rich, but richer than supposed." The traditional belief in the Tullivers "was carried in richer blood, having elements of generous imprudence, warmer affections, and hot-tempered rashness". Such are hereditary contributions to the two young folk, and it is clearly seen how Tom fulfils the hopes of the Dodsons, and Maggie reflects the congenital tendencies

(1) "Life & Letters", Cross: P.368.

(2) Edition, P.281.

(3) Ibid, P.282.

of the Tullivers.

Maggie early showed well-defined traits which marked her as an extraordinary child. To her father she was a "knowing child", and could "read out of a book like the parson". At nine, with straight uncurlable hair, rash and spasmodic in activity, disliking the womanly labor of patchwork, fond of the water and the mill, with a tendency to take too much of a chance of being "drowned", and showing fits of almost uncontrollable sullenness, she was the despair of her simple-minded and even-tempered mother. Tom was the only object of Maggie's ardent affections, strengthened by the absence at school. Her yearning, passionate nature always sought a symbol for its expression, and her brother with his strong, practical, masterly tone helped to fill the void in her life. When he was absent, or her admiration under a cloud, the old broken doll in the attic became the fetish. The nails in its head and the neglected toilet testified to that rash impetuosity which overran her precocity of mind, and made her appear a child of spirit, or what we would term ungovernable temper.

The early and pronounced instinctive proclivities soon found expression in childish activities. Play, that relief for overwrought impulse, either alone or with her brother and cousin, found her an ardent undertaker in all its parts. The impulse to imitate was not so strong in her, being superseded by a tendency to respond to the power of suggestion of the moment. Sudden and unexpected action left her no time to consider results either to herself or those around her. She was too much a child of impulse to ask herself what her parents or even Tom would do under the circumstances. Thus the very impulse to unreflective rashness in response to irritation caused the jagged hair-bob, and the consequent consternation of her relatives and her own disgrace. Of sympathetic emotion she had abundance, not limited to human beings. It arose out of that lively imagination and passionate nature which made affection an imperative force in her young



life. Even the toads and ants were her friends. About each she wove human relations both tender and touching. They fed her creative powers and became a necessary part of her mental endowments. Though extraordinary in constructive skill, Maggie lived in all the wonderland of childhood.

Added to these and playing no mean part in her career are the more specific emotional tendencies of fear, anger, curiosity, acquisitiveness, gregariousness, and even self-abasement. They mixed delight with despair. She was the wonder of her father, and the object of contumely from the sedate and phlegmatic aunts. It was the remarkable combination of tendencies to excess that made her long for her brother's return, then quarrel with him when he was present. She was all things in extreme, and the very ardency of her affections, with the careless rashness of actions, made her appear "spiteful" to her matter-of-fact brother. Such a term to her sensitive soul lashed it into self-abasement. The withering scorn of her aunts was nothing to the reproaches of her native companion.

From the time we meet her, Maggie is a girl who cannot be at home in her environment. Strong impulses, natural mental endowments which made her "quick" and "knowing", yearnings after expansiveness and immensity make her crave a world in which she sees herself a queen. From the sympathy of her being and through the very passionateness of developing habits, idealizing elements were soon to emerge. These forced her across the Rubicon, and soon the simplicity of her surroundings forms a sphere in which her soul is to find its severest conflict. Through it all her life became a struggle for ideals, the scene of which is scarcely ever beyond the immediate home circle.

The same environment which made eternal war in the soul of Maggie, brought a sphere of conquest of Tom. Congenital attraction soon followed divergent lines of growth, until each formed a complete contrast to the other. In Tom, genuineness and honesty, with an impulsive power to command, combined with that strength-

ening instinct of fairness, soon produced exuberance of boyish pride in life, which made him master of his surroundings. The fact that he had "thrashed all the boys at Jacob's" was an indication of the only condition under which he could happily live. School life with his mill-like attempt at "education" simply glossed over his manners and demeanor, leaving his instinctive and impulsive nature, received from heredity, simple but strong. To him a girl if simple and obedient was an object of affection and care. If impulsive and original, she was of the inferior feminine species, which his developed idea of fairness regarded as outside the pale of "thrashing". All expression of will-power in a girl was impishness and "spiteful" disobedience to born superiority. Tom was a child of his day and generation and reflects that obstinacy to change from traditional ideas. Under the stress of elemental human sympathy, touched by a common sorrow arising from the family "lawing", brother and sister are seen to be more to each other than at any other time. But with the re-invasion of life interests, they again diverge to their own spheres. His proprietary regard for responsibility always made him ready to offer all the pecuniary help possible. But when the strong instincts of honor which had remained untouched by reflection were violated, he acted in the stern manner of a despot. His environment, conventional in its simplicity, endorsed his attitude, but in the light of those struggles in Maggie for a larger, fuller life, his reactions appear dwarfed and unsympathetic.

Much can be said of those habits of patient industry and honest endeavor, actuated by the noble purpose of retrieving the family name, and supporting his helpless father and mother. His story alone would serve a high purpose in portraying the life-renewing forces of a nation. The tragedy of a broken home brought out the finer qualities of his being. His "strong self-assertive nature" found its main spring of action. Acquired habits revealed the real self, and his response to the call of immediate duties fulfilled the real desire for manhood worthy of unqualified admiration. The success that attended his frank and self-sacrificing efforts were due to

these hereditary endowments bequeathed by the Dodsons' meticulous sagacity, improved by the lessons of his father's imprudent rashness. To him, the "lawing" disputes appeared as "kicking the pricks", a method not in harmony with the canons of the Dodsons' success. His life became the embodiment of admirable efficiency and dutiful commonsense, and thus a constant check and worthy example to his more emotional and unreasonable sister.

But if Tom's was the type that finds its harmony in the commonplace, Maggie's was the far-reaching kind that must burst the bounds to express itself. The Fetish with its careless toilet, the neglected rabbits, Aunt Pullet's muddied floor, Lucy pushed into the cow-trodden mud, and Tom's wine spilt, are all indications of developing hopelessness at finding harmony with simple surroundings. By means of the Bible, Bunyan, and the Dictionary, imagination was strengthened and perception grew into ideas, creating habits of thought. Desires became more forceful motives resulting in almost reckless action. Forced by the commonplace in which her lot was cast, she wove her existence into a world of imagery in which she lived a dual life, generally recalled from the higher to the lower by her mother's repeated platitudes or Tom's stern realities.

Wounded sensibilities at her aunt's aroused the migratory instinct, which resulted in an effort to explore the gypsy world in search of romance. She found the gypsies far from the picture created by her world of imagery, and thus experienced her first disillusion. Nothing is more deliciously treated in George Eliot's works than the picture of Maggie seated amid the nomads questioning their knowledge of geography and history, also with innate sympathy imagining that she can revolutionize their ways of living by a little domestic science. The revelation of their earthiness strengthened by the remembrance of Tom's off-hand but truer observations of their habits, reacted with the more specific emotional tendency of fear, and memory of home and its associations bore a new significance.

The return with the unexpected meeting with her father and his sympathy, for a time lessened her loneliness and caused her to see more interest in her home surroundings.

Another milestone in Maggie's psychic growth was reached when she met Philip Waken at Mr. Stelling's. Impressionistic, subject to "spirits of peevish sensibility", "half of it nervous irritability, half of it the heart bitterness produced by the strong sense of his deformity", he appealed to the strong affection of pity in Maggie. His keen mind, affable manners, and soul for music touched that other world of emotion in which she delighted to rumigate. She watched Tom's "blundering patronage" to the son of her father's sworn enemy with a feeling of insult, and felt all the more bound to appear friendly. Her fervid nature reacted with childish devotion to the springs of wonder at Philip's superior knowledge until the emotions had created a tenacity not soon to be relaxed. Later on she attributed its strength to the tendency to care for the under dog common to idealizing natures. Her presence and affection appeared to bring the best in him to the surface, and prepare for that later struggle in which the two became embroiled. It had its effect upon Maggie's increasing criticism of Tom. Though she still clung to him with all the ardor of her nature, divergence received an impetus from his apparently unsympathetic treatment of the unfortunate school-mate.

As a young girl attending her sick father, we find her before "the dull walls of this sad chamber which was the centre of her world,- a creature full of eager, passionate longings for all that was beautiful and glad; thirsty for all knowledge; with an ear straining after dreamy music that died away and would not come near to her; with a blind unconscious yearning for something that would link together the wonderful impressions of this mysterious life and give her soul a sense of home in it". (1) The "contrast between the outward and the inward" with its

(1) "Edition, P.243.

"painful collisions", had become still more poignant. She had now reached the stage where opening womanhood presents the vista of life's purposes, and all the forces of consciousness coalesce to cement early impressions. Up till now, the "dream world" of fancy had appeared sufficient for her. She had imagined herself satisfied with all Scott's novels and Byron's poems. Sagas and poets had lured her more than saints and martyrs. But now "this hard, real life" had impressed itself upon her increasing sense of realities, and demanded explanation. In her "soul's hunger and her illusions of self-flattery", she had begun to nibble at the "thick-rinded fruit of the tree of knowledge, filling her vacant hours with Latin, geometry, and the forms of the syllogism", (1) but the little sordid tasks of home and the sense that Tom was no longer her playfellow, had only increased the emptiness of her weary, joyless lot and strengthened her tender, demonstrative love. Without the knowledge of, and instruction in "the irreversible laws within and without her which governing the habits, become morality, and developing feelings of submission and dependence, become religion" (2), she fell a prey to that introspective analysis suggested by the discovery of "Thomas a Kempis". This is where all the precocity with which our author endows Maggie appears. Youth is not the time when imagination is impressed with all the seriousness of questioning motives. It is the time when we solicit the strengthening will-power to act with cohesive force in the direction of that which is naively perceived as the good, without romancing on the pangs of remorse through human depravity.

But Maggie had no religious instructor to instil such knowledge of the positive side of life to prevent the wallowing in her emotional analysis. She is not the type to be led by our author into the field of social feelings. She had to go through the process of testing impulse by response to environment. Panting for happiness she thinks she has found the key in the medium of her feelings. Conse-

(1) Edition, P.295.

(2) Ibid, P.297.

quently she is soon "forming plans of self-humiliation and entire devotedness", seeming to see in this renunciation an "entrance into that satisfaction which she had so long craved in vain". But she had failed to see "the inmost truth of the old monk's outpourings, that renunciation remains sorrow, though willingly borne". Knowing nothing of doctrines and systems, of mysticism or quietism, she accepted it as the "unquestioned message" of a "human soul's belief and experience", rather than "the chronicle of a solitary, hidden anguish, struggle, trust and triumph".

(1)

Thus we pass through the stage of what may be called Maggie's conversion. Without religious influence within her own environment, but by a voice from the Middle Ages, life had gained meaning and intensity, the current of the feelings turned in the direction of ideal ends, impulse controlled by will to realize larger desires, and habits related to purposes discovered within herself.

From this time on the various forces surrounding her were to test the strength of that repression. She met it first when immediate desires in line with that ideal purpose set her about helping in the finances of the home. Tom did not like her "lowering herself" in that way, which was taking in plain sewing. This appeal was along the line of aversion to the menial, born of family pride and social demeanor. But another obstacle in the path of self-mortification, a stronger one, was the appeal of resurgent affection when she met Philip again in the "Red Deeps". All her tender, demonstrative sympathy which she had so innocently suppressed, now glowed with vibrancy as she revived those associations out of which had come a symbol of her emotional life. Pity is a subtle power, and ere we are conscious of it, the best intentions are uprooted or overpowered. Now this object of pity become the embodiment of rationalistic philosophy, and by means of that affinity between them, Philip attacked the foundations of the



holiest vows. To him renunciation was unnatural, it was "mere cowardice seeking safety in negation". "Every rational satisfaction of your nature that you deny now, will assault you like a savage appetite" (1), was a prophecy in which Philip himself became a victim. Meanwhile, "the need of being loved, the strongest need in Maggie's nature" (2), could not succumb without conflict to the repressive power of a severe morality. She was conscious of concealment in these clandestine meetings with the son of the family's inveterate foe, but all the force of acquired purposes was insufficient to suppress native affection until relations with her own brother were threatened. Before that larger symbolism of life's meaning, which held the only ground on which she stood firm, intuitive emotions were sacrificed and she became a slave to a promise. For this "passivity" in Maggie, our author was criticized by Sir Edward Lytton in a letter to her. She apparently admitted the justice of the criticism, and stated that had it been possible, she would have "altered or expanded the scene" (3). Suffice it to say that if the lack of self-asserting activity was unconscious, our author was nearer to what self-renunciation would demand of its devotee than if she had obsessed the scene with some psychic aberration.

The last stage in the category of reactions is the most tragic and difficult to understand. It is the one which more than any other scene in the earlier novels, seems to threaten the adherence to the strictly probable. Criticism on the side of realism did not, however, swerve the author from her position. Of it all she says in a letter to her publisher in 1860, "Maggie's position towards Stephen Guest - is too vital a part of my whole conception and purpose for me to be converted to the condemnation of it. If I am wrong there - if I really did not know what my heroine would feel and do under the circumstances in which I deliberately placed her - I ought not to have written this book at all, but

(1) Edition, P.539.

(2) Ibid, P.37.

(3) "Life & Letters", Cross: P. 384.

quite a different book, if any. If the ethics of art do not admit the truthful presentation of a character essentially noble, but liable to error - error that is anguish to its own nobleness - then, it seems to me the ethics of art are too narrow and must be widened to correspond with a widening psychology." (1)

It is in the realm of that psychology that Maggie's character appears consistent. George Eliot's ideals are more in the sphere of motives than in the action judged apart. Hence, an environment appeals to her wherein the nobility of motive may not be apparent, but may be shown in conflict to the judgments passed by social conventions. The misjudgments passed by social institutions constitute the real tragedy, not the early sad death of Maggie and Tom. Hence, the tendency to lapse which caused the stupefying collision with her environment had been anticipated. It was right in line with all her conduct. A soul that is more inclined to analyse its motives, and reflect upon the relation of such to the universe, will not be likely to observe the social criterion or act to its standard. As a child her rashness had been a bye-word. The "Red Deeps" echoed the conflict of inclination and principle. Philip Waken was a greater anomaly than Stephen Guest. In the case of Stephen, physical prowess took the place of physical disability, and admiration led to love, the same as pity. Hence the maelstrom of Maggie's career arose from the very strength of her tenderest emotions, and the instinctive yearnings of her nature.

"We can recover the genuine import of ideals and idealism only by disentangling this unreal mixture of thought and emotion. The act of deliberation, - consists in selecting some foreseen consequence to serve as a stimulus to prevent action (2). Dewey's direction for ideal recovery has been anticipated by George Eliot, for we see how Maggie awakes to the realization of the issues involved when all the

(1) "Life & Letters", Cross: P.385.

(2) "Human Nature & Conduct", Dewey: P.261.

force of acquired habits and engrained principles reasserted themselves. It was the ideal self seen in the light of contrast with the momentary triumph of feeling. Stephen "could commit crimes" for the symbol of his happiness, but Maggie raised the question into the light of life's sternest endeavors. She cannot choose a good that is wrong toward others. Her attitude turned to the social relationship with its consequent reaction upon her own desires. "We can't choose happiness either for ourselves or for others; we cannot tell where that will lie. We can only choose whether we will indulge ourselves in the present moment, or whether we will renounce that, for the sake of obeying the divine voice within us, for the sake of being true to all the motives that sanctify our lives. I know this belief is hard; it has slipped away from me again and again; but I have felt that if I should let it go forever, I should have no light through the darkness of this life." (1) In these words of Maggie to Stephen, we have the anguish of a noble soul in error. The better part of mind and calmer affections still remain true to those sanctifying motives. Everything that follows, the despondency of despair, the stigma of social and family ostracism, or the censure of her own soul at the misery she has caused others, are all the outcome of that ideal she had enunciated out of her own experience, and to which she held with tenacity.

A few years before, in the saddening emotions which are strong in a common sorrow, brother and sister had felt bonds which united them. Once again and finally, that bond was to reassert its strength through another catastrophe. One feels as he reads that a common disaster is the only force that could bring them together, and it forms in the physical unity a parable of the unity aimed at in the lives of both.

(1) Edition, P.493.

CHAPTER IV."SILAS MARNER": 1861.

A study in the influence of the symbolism of emotional activity. Heredity and tradition taking an increasingly important part on a standard of lower intelligence, but strong feelings. Environment showing that "remedial influence of pure human relations", amid the large simplicity of the lives of the poor.

SILAS MARNER: 1861.The Psychological Aspect of the Book.

Man as a social being, finding himself only as he consciously or unconsciously relates himself to fellow mortals, and forming in that association, the direction and development of his best impulses both moral and religious, is the sphere in which we find Silas Marner a type. The particular agents of this process are the emotions and feelings of what we would call a very ordinary mortal, perhaps below even the average of intellectual acumen, but strong in moral impulse; perhaps lacking in idealistic perception, but keen in tenacity of ethical purpose.

The story, simple in its compactness of plot, shows more unity than our author usually sought on the surface, and the purpose is easily evolved. As such it lends itself for a fuller treatment along the lines of the two great qualities of her novel writing. Hence, the realism will be more fully developed after the psychological has been traced, to show the background in harmony with the soul-forces brought into play. A due and even tender regard is shown to all those clings to traditional associations in which a soul has found its anchorage in life. Hereditary tendencies developed under such conditions are seen to be severed only with the hazard of soul injury. Selfish isolation, social estrangement, religious decadence to the point of nullity,- the loss of those things we call the real value of life is found as a result of such an isolation. From this condition of human depravity the self can be saved only by a shock. Leading at first to a state worse than the former, it paved the way for gradual grafting of those human emotions, with a consequent widening of the horizon of vision, until it was gathered again into the complex whole. It is the story of <sup>a</sup> being severed from associations which inborn impulse and traditional ideas made sacred, through desert aridity of the unsocial, back to a better and stronger altruism. It is imperfect

manhood passing through miserhood to a better and more perfectly universal humanity.

As the chief character, Marner embodies all the main forces within himself. Thus, the minor or secondary figures contribute to his evolution, rather than find ends in themselves. As such they will be considered in this study. From this standpoint it is better to start from the natural stage in Marner's life. George Eliot presents him first as already in Raveloe fifteen years, a miser by repute, with "mysterious peculiarities which corresponded with the exceptional nature of his occupation, and his advent from an unknown region called 'North'ard'". Lack of sympathy with the youth of the village and uncongenial aloofness from the grown-ups, made him suspected and avoided by young and old. To their semi-superstitious minds he was scarcely mortal, and anything might be expected, even to miraculous and ghostly exercises, from this unique specimen of the human race.

The mental and emotional processes resulting in this unhealthy condition of affairs are shown to be the outcome of a peculiar hereditary endowment reacting to a particular environment. In that "North'ard" country, his life had been filled with movement, mental and social, also responsibility and privilege, for he had been a member of the close fellowship of Lantern Yard religious community. Except for a chance reference later on in the story, we know nothing of his family or home life. Sufficient, however, is offered to let us know that he was of an "impressible, self-doubting nature which at an inexperienced age, admires imperativeness, and leans on contradiction" (1) Congenital tendencies had not endowed him with much intellectual impulse, which, uniting with the moral form the power of will cleaving out its own road. Instead, we find a "trusting simplicity of the defenceless deer-like gaze" (2), and the "absence of special observation". Though vivid in sensation, it was allowed to be interpreted rather by his environ-

(1) Edition, P.15.

(2) Ibid, P.15.

ment, than by self. The undernourished physique appeared to be overbalanced by the highly-strung nervous system, developing fervor which is often mistaken for intelligent zeal. Added to this, he appears to have inherited that sudden suspension of consciousness resulting in a muscular rigidity, and interpreted by his associates as a mark of spirit possession.

To such a one it is impossible "to see life steadily and see it whole". The narrow ultra-evangelical environment of Lantern Yard would single out his emotions, strengthening one to the practical exclusion of the rest. Consequently, religious devotion and fervor became predominant in his life. This to his unreflective mind was never separated from the form in which it was cast.

Narrow as was the emotional life of the church fellowship, its currents ran deep. Its precepts demanded self-analysis, for it is in a man's hidden life that the religious finds its sanctions. Marner, like all the others, sought in his innermost being for those promptings to action which we call impulse. He found them vague and shadowy, but they appeared as guiding principles trenchant and clear in conduct. Heredity had supplied him with the clinging tendency, and his environment had supplied the restricted but intense hopes to which he clung. His introspective training led him away from the acts to see the motives which directed all the energies. With these we are never in doubt. His faithful attendance at church, his fervid devotion, his readiness to meet the call of that duty which his own nature and associations promulgated, and the consequent ease with which he became a victim to the cupidity of his friend, all attest the sincerity of his impulse and the strength of his motives.

Form and feeling having never been separated by acts of reflection, Marner, like his fellow members, doubted not the authority which convicted him a thief. In his mind, however, he was still clear, and the inflicted guilt failed to convince him. Though expelled from the society where all his best emotions had been



fed, and to which he instinctively clung for moral support and religious vision, his unsullied temper could not show malice, he still can conceive the truth that "God will clear the innocent". When that failed through its passivity to withstand the accuser and shame the truth out of him, his mind lost that grip of elemental truth, and God was forever denounced in the lie he saw perpetrated on himself. It was intuition grown out of the only real experience he had known, breaking under the strain of conflict within. His intuitive faith now left all the affections, once so tender and strong, severed and wounded, and provided a vacancy into which the first presentable object might find a home. Hence, we have in the lonely man plodding his way to a new environment, where he might forget and be forgotten, a fit subject for the evolution of a miser.

During the latter part of the last century environment was emphasized as the shaping force of character. George Eliot uses it in all her novels as the arena where the peculiarities of the individual may find a way to the social self. Unless of the strongly idealized type, they all fall a victim to it. Even with those who acquire their environment, e.g., Deronda, there is an underlying feeling of strain and unnaturalness resulting. As a novelist she was unduly influenced by the over-emphasis on that phase of our psychic expression. In spite of arguments for the all-powerful influence of surroundings, it is doubtful whether they do any more than determine the channels along which stimulus we call temptation, comes. Suggestion may be presented in a forcible manner, but predisposition must be taken into account to determine the reaction. Our social conditions are manifold and by no means present the same stimuli to all men. An artist might have found in the rustic Raveloe a scene to realize the ideal value of his artistic temperament, an engineer a field for his ingenuity, a merchant a place to spend a quiet eventide. A man takes his self with him wherever he goes, and this will find expression in domination or surrender to his new sphere.

Had Marner possessed that will-power, the result of unity of intellect and impulse, Raveloe might have become a new birthplace, and its associations another fostering home for broader and stronger emotions. This it did become finally, but at first, it had to be a grave to his tenderest feelings and idealist hopes. "There was nothing here, when he rose in the deep morning quiet and looked out on the dewy brambles and rank tufted grass, that seemed to have any relation with that life centering on Lantern Yard, which once had been to him the altar place of high dispensations" (1). Such is the summary of his first reaction to the scene wherein he had chosen to forget his past. The emotional mood associated with whitewashed walls, well-known figures, the little pews, and the preacher's throne, from which were delivered the decrees of heaven, found no counterpart in the quiet landscape. All that he had come to regard as Christianity and God's kingdom, found no fitness here. Hence, those religious instincts which had grown into experience through the medium of fervid associations, must now atrophy, or else struggle vainly against an unreciprocative apathy. All the emotional symbols gone, his impulses could find no objectifying substances in the bovine existence of village religious life. Hence, desire as a function could find no satisfaction, producing at first a morbid discontent, to be released only by a closer application to the spinning wheel.

This Marner did. The more desire recreated those images of former happy relationships, the more he applied himself to the task of manual labor. It was the only outlet for body and soul. With memory and thought turned within, this simple, trusting nature, unable to give new relationships a chance to reproduce the feeling tone of pleasure through new ideas, crushed the feelings associated with desire and memory, and he became a recluse.

Two or three instances arose by which he might have found reinstatement in

(1) Edition, P.25.

social relations. These, however, were vigorously suppressed through that narrow morbid morality which taught him to question the motives of his action. Hence, he abandoned all chance of publicity and even fame as a quack, which his shy, timid nature regarded with instinctive horror.

No house swept and garnished remains so for long. Marner's capacity for fervent emotions could not for long endure the lack of symbols. His temptation came right along the line of the means he had chosen as an agent of destruction. His earning capacity at his old home had met with small rewards. These he had regarded in the light of a trust. Now no outlet for his religious motive of giving appeared, for no object of desire was created by satisfied impulse. With larger earnings, came the consciousness of possession. New sensations arose from his well-earned gold within his own palm. The absence of ends in life left his mind now in attention to the joys of that native instinct "to have and to hold". The gold found its reaction easy in a mind already accustomed to surround ideas with affections, and ere he had scarcely begun to enjoy the thought of his own, his fervid nature had placed it upon the highest pedestal within self-forces. From this step until the all-absorbing desire was recreated with increased strength is rapid progress. This objectified desire now filled the place of all gone before, haloed all his strenuous efforts, restricted even his physical wants, and threatened his vitality.

So far the picture of self-conquest is complete - but at what a price! Our ideals create us; the object of our desires reacts upon ourselves, and we become a reflex of the potentialities contained therein. The burden of this is that no estrangement from social relations can be compensated for by intensity of absorption in an unsocial object. It was so with Marner. His life became as barren as the non-productive power of gold to a man in the desert. Imagination stultified in its attempt to recreate images of bye-gone days, now was limited to conjuring

up pictures of alluring treasure; memory was limited to the revelry of the night before, and aspiration became morbid passion for the same recurring tactual sensations. Self-centred activity was shrivelling his soul into a comatose state.

No wonder that in such a condition, he found no companionship with fellow-villagers, and could neither find nor express sympathy with their affairs. To him life became a servitude bound by the rhythm of the loom; to the villagers, a possibly demented but harmless, avaricious hoarder; to the children, he supplied that incentive to impulse toward experience with ghosts and the uncanny things of life.

In such a moribund state, only a shock can release and redistribute the energies of body and soul. It came in the sudden and mysterious disappearance of all he held dear. Once again the object of his desires, and the stimulus to impulse slipped away, and he was left a stranded wreck upon the debris of dis-associated emotions. This time, however, his earlier altruism was not present to prevent resentment and indignation exploding in denial. No impulse was present to start again in new surroundings. He now saw nothing but the dreary blank of self's emptiness with no force to recuperate. Auto-suggestion failed before the physical fact, and as a result life became shorn even of impulse to live.

One single instance, however, shows that amid all the tragedy of a forsaken soul, there yet was preserved a basis of the former idealism on which restoration might take place. In the ravings of that tragic realization of the loss of his gold, Silas rushed to the village tavern. The instinct to turn to fellow-mortals was not dead, and pathetic as it was, it revealed a strain of the old order. Jem Rodney, the only questionable character fit as a subject for suspicion, fixed his image in Marner's mind, and the association with Jem with the robbery resulted.

In the timid, hesitating Silas, there was no desire to accuse wrongly, but it was his last hope. He does not wish Jem any harm. Justice in the shape of retribution meted out to himself at Lantern Yard reacts with old resentment. This his mind scorns to inflict, but consciousness of rights makes the appeal for the simple return of his money with no retributive consequences from the arm of the law he had learned to look upon as an enemy to man. In this instinctive regard for a fellow being who might suffer as he had done, there lay the germ of a possible restoration.

It is questionable whether any power in nature similar to any previous experience of Marner's could have resuscitated the lethargic force of his being. The form in which restoration came was such as to make its appeal the most effective. The golden locks of Eppie in the very place where his gold had been fitted into and replaced the symbols of his overwrought emotions. But the locks had a new significance, and the process of growth of meaning is as entrancing as the other was tragic.

"Impulses are the pivots upon which the reorganization of activities turns, they are agencies of deviation, for giving new direction to old habits, and changing their direction" (1). The child became that pivot in Marner's life upon which activities could turn toward reorganization. Nothing else could have supplied the impulse to break through encrusted habits, and discover that old trench leading back to those vague memories of early days. At first, memory and instinct expressed themselves only in pity, and necessity to supply physical wants, a line of activity not foreign to his nature. When he goes to the Red House to see the doctor for the child's unfortunate mother, he reacts with dread, lest his new found treasure disappear like the gold. Before his want has

(1) "Human Nature & Conduct", Dewey: P.93.

crossed the threshold of consciousness, his newly stirred emotions are fighting for satisfaction in possession.

Once the child is left with him, she becomes a new force at work in his life. That toddling bunch of irrepressible activities and innocent appropriations begins to form an interest in his mind. Crowding sensations concomitant to that of possession flooded his being with the resultant rearrangement of his whole complex. It became a case of the "expulsive power of a new affection". His fervid zeal of former days which reflected the sensitive and impressible soul, was now expressed in all its glow. When he left Lantern Yard, indignation and resentment, whose fruit is hate, had been preserved from fruition by the meekness of inherited passivity. Now the revived emotions soon surged into an unquestioned affection, whose effect upon himself was too much in accord with sanctions of intuition to require any repression.

The gold had been futile in its appeal, owing to its very nature as a means and not an end-forming purpose. With the child as a substitute, its human nature unstained by the consciousness of selfish direction, represented the social relations in all their unsullied fellowship. She became a stimulus to the social impulse, and unconsciously led out the bruised tendrils of Warner's rejuvenated feelings to the points of contact with fellow mortals. First through Dolly Winthrop, by the medium of Eppie's physical necessities, into larger friendships made possible through the homespun commonsense morality and religion; then gradually drawn by Eppie and Dolly, Silas blunderingly, shy and and timid as ever, distrusting himself, confident only in the gleam of the soul which had become part of his own, slowly took on the change from an apparition to a man.

Our author traces that growth back again to life as she does away from it, simply through reactions to man's social instinct. Without the aid of religion,

except in so far as its effects were produced through the unselfish endeavor to do what was considered right for Eppie, Silas finds his way back to a better altruism than he knew before. The gentler shocks which came to him first in Eppie's childhood, when in response to migratory instincts she broke her tether and wandered alone into danger, later with the dread of budding affection and possible separation in marriage with Aaron, the bond which bound him to her proved its strength. After the money was restored, though it was placed on the table in the same order as night after night many years ago, it failed to act as a stimulus and thus reassert any hold on affections. As an object of desires, it had passed away, because interests were fixed on something that had taken hold on the real self and united it to its more universal and perfect form.

Once again that link with his life was to be threatened, when the real father made the claim based on consanguinity. Even that, however, <sup>was</sup> shown to be on a lower scale and of less binding value than affinity of soul. Eppie's choice to remain with the only father she had known was the confirmation to that work of transfiguration wrought within a being in unity with itself and society, and a witness to moral and spiritual decrepitude of isolation.

#### The Realism in "Silas Marner".

From this side of the question it is doubtful whether the so-called purpose novel can be wholly realistic in treatment. When we remember that George Eliot wrote with the motive "to set in a strong light the remedial influences of pure natural human relations" (1), we react with a sense of emphasis upon the influence rather than upon the natural relations. Strong lights often so magnify individual actions that they distort the judgment, while if they are continued and we see the soul naked too long, the sight becomes satiating. Silas, however, is

(1) "Life & Letters", Cross: P.401.



tempered with the prudence and sympathy of art. Hence the dangers of ethical purpose are avoided, and in fact, made to contribute to the realism which it endangers.

The earlier novels witness the almost complete merging of the author in the characters. The scenes forming the background are the product of indelible impressions to which she turned for the panorama of life. To anyone acquainted with the Midland scenery, every descriptive epithet is like breathing native air. Specially is this so with *Silas Marner*. It requires no effort of the imagination to create a realistic picture of the backgrounds. Thus she describes Raveloe as "nestling in a snug, well-wooded hollow, quite an hour's journey on horseback from a turnpike, where it was never reached by the vibrations of the coach-horn, or of public opinion" (1). A score of instances flash to the mind of anyone acquainted with Coventry-Avon country. Characteristic also are "the fine old church and large churchyard in the heart of it, and two or three large brick and stone homesteads, with well-walled orchards and ornamental weather-cocks". Even the empty stone-pits seen by the isolated house add to its isolation and help to form a fit symbol of Marner's existence.

This type of nature treatment is extended to the village inn. The "Rainbow" (2) becomes the reflection of isolated intelligence. There we see the parish clerk condescending, but conscious of superior importance; the landlord judicious and obsequious, the semi-pugilistic farrier emphatic in his contradictions. All are deliciously and inimitably presented in the village symposium. Village types are clearly drawn in all their "sympathetic rendering".

The style of conversation was "unflinching frankness", which "was the most

(1) *Edition*, P.9.

(2) *Ibid.*, Chap.VI.

piquant form of joke" (1) Ben Winthrop in passing judgment on the musical ability of Mr. Tooky the deputy clerk: "But as for you, Mr. Tooky, you'd better stick to your 'Amen's'; your voice is well enough when you keep it up in your nose. It's all inside as isn't right made for music; it's no better nor a hollow stock" (2). This is an instance of bovine wit and its artistic treatment. One can easily recognize the dialect of our grandfathers, with the absence of the brutal sneer or the insinuating coarseness.

Dolly's observations on all the subjects that come within her purview are gentle, at times witty and kindly critical. She is of the Hackitt-Poyser family, but her humor is not so penetrating or epigrammatic as to stock the countryside with witticisms. On all subjects, from Marner's confused tenacity of the child, its clothing and churching, to the "big words" which the parson might use if he were to expand on "drawing o' the lots" (3), Dolly is perfectly representative of village commonsense helpfulness. She is the ready, trusting kind, relying upon her superiors to set the standard which rules in the unknown things of life, but in the affairs of everyday, she grasps the essentials to make life tolerable and sweet.

The Red House is marked by disorder, both in its rooms and in its inmates. It is a picture native to all who realize the absence of that power working for order, tenderness and affection in the household,-- the mother. Dunsey and Godfrey, one the good-natured, but careless spendthrift rapidly degenerating into a dissolute rascal, the other a mixture of good and evil with the lack of a purposeful vision to direct and control his powers, both are real to life as known in the quiet villages of the Midlands, where the upper class was marked by mediocrity and wild oats regarded as a necessary form of discipline.

(1) Edition, P. 83.

(2) Ibid, P.83.

(3) Ibid, P.250.

But it is in that which directly concerns Marner himself where realism finds both its greatest support and strain. From the narrow alleys, dark lanes and small courts, we could hardly expect a Tito or a Lydgate. All the cramped surroundings are seen in the hereditary forms producing the simplicity of Silas' nature. It is a situation which faithfully represents the narrow views, cramped intellect, and emphatic decisions. The question is: Does the situation correlate the passivity in Silas' mind under the injustice and suffering brought on by what is to us an entirely unfair and foolish method of finding the guilty? Such a circumstance ought to be a challenge to a young man, either to live down the ostracism and conquer environment, or drive him, John-the-Baptist-like to the wilderness simply to find his bearings, relate the episode to general experience, then decide whether surrender or indifference were the better policy. Instead of this, the repressed nature trembled before the authority of God's instruments, and he never appeared to question the verdict. At first it looks as if our author is doing what Leslie Stephen calls "playing the part of Providence to her characters", but she redeems the trend in that embittered career by keeping before us those "influences of pure human relations".

Another instance is where Dunsey is followed in his diabolical acts, first of stealing the horse, then stealing the money. All the processes of his mind are carefully portrayed for us. Of course an omniscient knowledge is allowed authors so long as experience confirms such action. But here there is no evidence except the horse missing and the money stolen, also the absence of Dunsey Cass! However, the strain on imagination is not overbearing, for the restraint exercised by the author has reduced the line of action well within the limit of common experience. There is no extravagant imagining incompatible with human nature.

Marner is true to himself to the end. In the restoration, the intellectual

and moral emphasis is in accord with his capacities and the simplicity of nature's background. His desires are all conceived within the realm of the reactions arising from such surroundings. Eppie also, especially in that anticlimactic scene where she has to choose between a real and known father, does not go beyond the powers of her traditional environment. She speaks in dialect scarcely less refined than Dolly, with the same grasp of elemental truth common to both. No effusive lachrymatory display or sentimentalism spoils the continuous artistic rendering of human feelings in that tense moment. It is portrayed in all the sincerity of emotional decisions, and Godfrey and Nancy accept their fate in that phlegmatic moralism which keeps the tone to the end. Thus the processes within the characters which our author has followed with minute analysis, are well correlated by the external events, and the reader can feel they are within the range of his own possible environment and experience.

CHAPTER V."ROMOLA": 1862-3.

The perspective of historical imagination tinges the realism with effort resulting in strain. The picture is clearer as a presentation of psychological forces and ethical laws operating as a result of the conflict between the Renaissance Movement and the Mediaeval Church at the end of the fifteenth century. Tito as a type of the Renaissance lacking the sympathies of inherited traditions follows the pathway of immediate choice and ends his selfishness in social frustration. Romola with hereditary impulses reacting beyond rationalistic tenets discovers in mysticism a sphere of narrow partyism, and turns to find herself in social sympathies.

ROMOLA: 1862-3.

In the modern novel it is comparatively easy for the experienced writer to find circumstances and scenery suitable for the portrayal of events and the evolution of characters. The historical novel, however, requires far more preparation, choice and imagination. To us stories of the day move amid scenes well-known, or described with such close association to them as to be easily imaged in the mind of the reader. When, however, creations are moved far into the realm of history, it is only with tremendous effort or native historical imagination that the situation can be so presented as to form complete pictures. To this is also added the necessity of keeping true to the possibilities of the age treated. The writer who would explore historic movements in search of material, has to keep these things in mind and govern choice accordingly. How much more is this judgment required when behind all those historic situations there are to be presented the processes that made them possible; the motives which controlled choice, and the circumstances which caused that choice to shape the nature of individuals and the character and destiny of nations.

Such a task is presented in "Romola". In this, the most pretentious book of George Eliot, all the marks are in evidence of that strenuous effort to get behind the mere glamor of names and events, and to see individuals in their own spheres working out their particular contributions to the movements of the times. No labor was spared to reconnoitre beforehand the ground for the arrangement of forces. The stage is laid with the thoroughness of an expert accustomed to secure unity of effect both in color and form. Description of scene and analysis of character either precede or accompany action and event, so much so as to at

times, preclude spontaneous activity. The canvas is filled with figures, each with a particular part to play, and the chief actors are recognized in the light of reactions suggested by the whole display of movement. This is the control under which the author labored, and out of such energized activity come three main characters,-- Romola, Tito and Savonarola.

Of Romola and Tito we must deal at length in order to understand the psychic forces operating. To analyze the motives of Savonarola, and the movements in which he appears to be the chief figure, would be far too great a task for the present effort. He is an historic character, whose life and work have for long been matters of historic research, and to do justice to him or to our author would necessitate questions of relevancy and even accuracy outside the psychic sphere. Sufficient notice will be taken of his work as comes within the realm of the other two. Their reactions to his peculiar genius will be the practical limit. Recognition likewise will be taken of other people in the story. Only as they assist in the reactions under which the main forces are portrayed will they come within this purview.

#### Tito Melema.

In accordance with the tenets evinced in all George Eliot's delineations, no character is allowed to drop topsy-turvy into her books. Either they are prepared for us by long processes of hereditary development, or sufficient light is thrown on their origin and training to reveal them as products of forces under which the accidents of birth or chance have placed them. Hence, when we find a young, good-looking, but shabbily-dressed stranger lying on the pavement of the Loggia de Cerchi in Florence one April morning at the end of the 15th century, with a valuable ring on his finger and his coat inlaid with jewels, we are not kept long in doubt as to his identity or the circumstances which caused his apparently forlorn appearance.



He is a Greek without a home, and at that time without a nationality. Heredity had destined that particular dye which was subdued in him until he again had been dipped over by long abodes and much travel in the land of gods and heroes. That redipped dye now appeared in him with its peculiar bias in his nature. It was the tendency to take with graceful ease all circumstances. This native proclivity to seek relief from conflict was entirely separated from the sterner qualities of his Greek ancestors whose privileges were won by the discipline of their nation's history. Tito had been born in Italy. Of his parents or early life we know nothing except that he was rescued from a life of cruelty by an Italian who had become to him a foster-father, seeking to establish such parental relation in which affinity and gratitude might grow.

The foster-father himself a product of that eager search after learning common to the period of the Renaissance, found the lad possessed of native qualities of mind that made him an apt pupil. He acquired with apparent ease the knowledge available of the ancient world of gods and heroes, showing rather a marked development in facility in speech, cultured manners and subtlety of intellect, rather than imbibing the stern morality of its rigorous teachers. It became an instance of learning grafted on an hereditary bias to assume traditional rights rather than responsibility within duties.

We must not forget that this novel is based on ethical concepts as much as on psychological observations. In the realm of the ethical we have the first act which bears in its train all the consequences of determinate choice. The question comes to Tito at this time: Shall he sell the gems and with the money rescue his foster-parent Baldesarre, who is now a slave prisoner of the Turks? The alternative is the chance of a life of comparative ease, prestige as a scholar, adventure as a politician, and friends suited to his temperament. It is duty versus delight, and all the forces of heredity and tradition now appear.

What sense of gratitude he has directs him in the path of perilous and self-sacrificing duty, while his native horror of the unpleasant, and impulse toward the desirable constrain him to evade the task. The motive to remain at ease in sweet forgetfulness in Florence is not sufficient. Hence, it is bolstered up by the probability of his father's death, and uncertain character of the quest, which supplies a shadowy and less useful appearance to the impulse of gratitude. Thus the motive to follow desire is strengthened until it becomes the stronger, to the exclusion of all others as a line of action. In that act of deliberate choice to avoid the demands of duty, a clear trait in Tito's character is manifest, which shapes all his future conduct. From this time on, we follow the pathway along which the soul degenerates into a metamorphosis of its former self.

The Epicurean lilt in Tito's nature - "removed alike from the gross, the sad, and the severe", was to a very large extent the result of congenital tendencies and training. As a consequence he criticized all those forces which held the uninstructed mind in awe. The Church clothed in the authority of the supernatural, and as an age-long institution, was to him but an outgrown and outworn superstition. He had early been removed from those associations in which the Church is the symbol of all the best feelings, and the guide to conduct. Hence its moral sanctions called forth no reverence from him, nor obedience to its dictates. Even in later life he was never in his element in a church, or among church prelates. It was but another power to be reckoned within the political chess-board, and to be obeyed or sacrificed for the sake of expediency. Thus his emotional impulses found stimulus outside the ecclesiastical pale, and consequently lacked that quality which its ideal purpose supplies.

The duality in Tito's emotional temperament is not entirely inconsistent. Tessa, the embodiment of simple, trusting, unreflective peasant innocence, makes

a strong appeal to his natural instincts of protection, sympathy and even love as far as he is capable. For after all, it is in all probability true that Tito loved Tessa with a stronger emotion than he did Romola. With a nature that never deliberately sought anyone's hurt, Tito found a being from whom he could obtain reverent admiration, willing obedience, condoning of faults, and an entire absence of prying into the peculiar vicissitudes of his experience. In other words, his desire to be worshipped found in her one who would render all the adoration he longed for, without any ugly questions to be answered; while in Romola, the daughter of the literary scholar and antiquity collector, he found all the beauty of form, mental poise, femininity of nature, allied with a moral nature outside religious fear or superstitious awe, that his Greek nature valued. The one corresponded to his aesthetic demands, the other to his natural instincts in their crude undisciplined form.

Entrance to the home of Bardi marks Tito's entrance to Florentine society. The qualities that were his passport to the one assured him a standing in the other. He learns from the loquacious barber that his particular aptitudes, allied with a morality regarded as Christian barbarism, may find a useful sphere of adventure; at the same time he receives advice concerning the use of Latin writers as a means of apparent flattery to the ear of a gullible officialdom. Spurred on by ambitious desire, he is led definitely along the road his first choice has decided. The rings and gems around which all his past was bound, and which linked him with a life he should have held dear, he now disposes of one by one. It requires an oily tongue to cover by facility of speech the falsehoods requisite to give them due sale. He can achieve their disposal with scarcely a feeling of loss or remorse. The compunction which should have risen in his mind at such a course is silenced by the desirable end to be obtained. All questioning from the significance of a questioning past is effect-

ively secured, at least as far as it is necessary to his pleasure, and he lives for the present with strategic evasiveness.

One alone sees beneath that mask,-- Piero di Cosimo, the painter. It required an artist to rend the veil. To him Tito appears the person suitable as a model for his idea of a traitor. "A perfect traitor should have a face which vice can write no marks on,-- lips that will lie with a dimpled smile,-- eyes of such agate-like brightness and depth that no infamy can dull them,-- cheeks that will rise from a murder and not look haggard" (1). At this suggestion of Piero's, Tito was transfixed, but the apparent calm with which he gained his habitual self-control only verified the insight of the painter. Tito was to be started more than once by apparently innocent observations which to his susceptibility became suggestions, but he learned to shake them off as mere effects of bad dreams.

The loose state of Italian affairs, the unstable condition of politics, and the varying elements in Florentine life made the chances of Tito appear as if Fortune had indeed taken him by the hand. The Renaissance had secured a firm hold. Learning outside the authority of the Church had created a superior air, but had not displaced the fanatical superstition to which the rank and file clung. The Medici, the ruling family, were the avowed advocates of scholastic endeavors, and men of learning were regarded as fit to rule, irrespective of piety or democratic sincerity. This state of flux between docile, obedient Mediaevalism and revolutionary criticism, the product of the new learning, now encouraged that laxity in political scruples seen in all radical periods of the world's history. Tito with no hereditary impedimenta from either side, and with a subtle efficiency strikingly contrasted with the usual *tricks* of diplomacy found no difficult task in reaching a responsible position in the official world.

His unmistakable, negative expression, which was at all times perfectly ver-

(1) Edition, P.40.

acious, and the absence of any uneasy claim, any restless vanity, together with the force of his manifold accomplishments won for him the opportunities in which he could excel. Missions to Rome, Milan, Pisa, as well as the special adroitness his facile ability displayed in critical situations, all increased his services to those who could use him for the promotion of their cause. In fact his very disinterestedness made him the more indispensable to the party he sought to help, which of course, was always the one that appeared to him to have the greater chances of success.

Tito's enemy, however, was under his own hat. All the finer emotions called into being by the tender relation of his benefactor, had to be explained away ere he ceased to exercise their normal functions. His subtle intellect had been active to this end. He had explained away the sentiment of society which would have acted as moral suasion in the proposed rescue of his enslaved parent. To him it appeared as a "tangle of anomalous traditions and opinions, which no wise man could accept as a guide". Love did not exist, but gratitude, that common instinctive impulse of all rational beings also appeared with no valid claim. He reasoned that he had as much claim on Baldesarre, as he had on him, and the interest which had caused him to take a lone lad and care for him took on the plausibility of over-emphasis on its personal aspect. Thus all the tissues of sentiment had been eaten through by the strategem of explanation. He was destitute both of awe, which inspires dread of wrong-doing, and of duty, which substitutes for dread that sense of obligation resulting in moral effort.

Cultured and sceptical, he was yet not without the basic elements of emotional activity. "He had been nurtured in contempt for the tales of priests whose impudent lives were a proverb, and in erudite familiarity with disputes concerning the Chief Good, which had after all, he considered, left it a matter of taste. Yet fear was a strong element in Tito's nature,-- the fear of what he believed or

saw was likely to rob him of pleasure." Such fear, based on sensual cowardice, did not act on Tito as a moral law restraining wrong-doing. Rather, being directed to a selfish end, it wrought for strategy in movement, which to others appeared perspicacity. It is such fear which clothes every unexpected suggestion with the spectra of personal danger. In Fra Luca and his message, he saw a possible deterrent to his stay in Florence. His very name became a nightmare to Tito until he learned of the monk's death. When he knew that the man was Romola's brother, his fear insinuated the possible consequences of the facts becoming known to her.

It was this fear which forced him all the way with those facile evasions of truth and in the duplicity in which he became an adept. Baldesarre's sudden appearance and physical contact gave a personal embodiment to this unpleasant emotion, to which he reacted with a stronger self-command and less honesty in his evasions. At each appearance he increased his tendencies to avoid even the semblance of truth in his explanations, while at the same time he wore the armor on his body. It enhanced Tito before Tessa; it was an indication to Romola of that secretive fear in life which came as a gulf between them. That unknown affiliation with some dread which Romola could not divine, gradually lessened the sense of dependence upon him for fuller emotional sympathy she had expected and looked for since their marriage.

Nothing is more tragic in the life of this man that the way he sacrificed the love of his wife for expedience. At first that beauty which was to him the expression of nobleness of mind had thrilled his whole being. Such response to his emotional stimulus had occasioned a sense of regret at the necessity of first deceits. His belief in her love was measured by her confidence in him. To him, that passion could not sustain the shock of disclosure of his secret.. Hence, there followed lack of mutual trust, which is the basis of emotional re-



sponse. All her efforts to reform her reactions according to his particular mould met with dismal failure, because the sympathy of interests grew dimmer. The climax arose when what was to him, her superstitious reverence for inanimate objects conflicted with his desires. The trust of her father's library had become her religion; to him it held no more meaning than his foster-parent's ring, which he could see no reason for retaining. Her love was wrecked on the violence done to tradition; his was sacrificed to the necessity of satisfying immediate desire. Thus she became little more than "the furniture of his mind". "Romola's touch and glance no longer stirred any fibre of tenderness in her husband. The good-humored, tolerant Tito, incapable of hatred, incapable almost of impatience, disposed always to be gentle to the rest of the world, felt himself strangely hard towards his wife, whose presence had once been the strongest influence he had known." "It was the sense of deception in you that changed me, and that kept us apart. You changed towards me the night you first wore the chain armor." In these words the young wife describes the rock on which their married life had split. Even then had confession been possible to Tito, it might have shown genuineness on which salvage could have been made. But such confession would require a change of purpose in him, to which he could not respond. Even to the agonized entreaty, his now developed habits of subterfuge evolved further lies.

The line of least resistance to desires which he had first chosen, gradually became a strenuous effort. The embroiling fate of partyism in Florence threatened at times to engulf him, and he maintained his safety only by increasing duplicity amid conflicting elements. The purposed ease now became a craving, until he was willing to sacrifice friend and foe alike, even to Savonarola. To relieve the ennui and danger of the situation, he at last prepared for secret and rapid flight.



Through it all he was forced to carry that increasing dread of the elusive Baldassarre. No fear of external affairs equalled that haunting shadow of dreaded revenge in the form of his foster-father. To his mind, now completely controlled by desire, there was no way out but flight. Had fear called up conquering qualities, which it usually has in the human race, he would have sought to remove that obstacle from his pathway. But the personified revenge paralyzed such reaction. Tito continued to seek ease in his environment with the goodwill concomitant to his purpose. Hence, to make another suffer deliberately could never become his aim. Fear was the one force his subtle powers could not overcome, and in the end he fell a victim to it. The fate which befell him was that frustration of selfishness born of refusal to share obligations which are the heritage of humanity, and the result was a moral tragedy.

#### Romola.

True to George Eliot's purpose, Romola presents almost an exact contrast to Tito. The bias in his nature had directed him to an environment where he might with safety and ease follow his own inclinations. Romola was surrounded with the voices of a past, memories that produced in her an impulse to carry on their meaning. Of real old Florentine stock, her father had inherited that "old family pride and energy, the old love of pre-eminence, the old desire to leave a lasting track of his footsteps on this fast-whirling earth" (1). The old scholar and collector showed some of the fighting qualities of his race, but they were all directed toward immortality of memory in the fruit of his life's work,-- a monumental library of annotated musty manuscripts, the backwash of the Renaissance. He was now blind; his son had forsaken classic learning for the abhorred superstitious reaction of monastic zeal; his daughter alone remained to be a solace and companion in the night gloom of his life.

(1) Edition, P. 44.

It was in the grim associations of an old-fashioned Florentine home, behind the "grim doors, with conspicuous scrolled hinges" (1), and amid the "marble fragments and relics of classic lore", that Romola secured ineffaceable impressions through the plastic period. When we meet her, she is a young maiden bearing the perceptible likeness to her blind father: "There was the same refinement of brow and nostril in both, counterbalanced by a full though firm mouth and powerful chin, which gave an expression of proud tenacity and latent impetuosity; an expression carried out in the backward poise of the girl's head, and the grand line of the neck and shoulders." (2)

In her efforts to be eyes and lips for her unfortunate father, she had imbibed those teachings which gave the impress to her views. Like Tito, she had been brought up in antagonism to the reverence given to absolute authority cast in mediaeval institutions, on erudite familiarity with free and frank criticism of systems of morality, and with discussions of the "summum bonum" of life, which left it a matter of choice. Unlike Tito, however, the emphasis had been on the relation of that knowledge to life around her. The near and necessary held the things of value. Duties arose out of filial relations which became binding obligations to a strong emotional nature. Through the family relationship which Tito had never known, had come the development of the social instincts cementing into moral qualities of honesty, genuineness, candour of dependence, virtue and sympathy.

The pathos in her father's lonely strength reacted in her with all the devotion to her purposes of which she was capable. It became the sphere of duties, and rights stimulated no response where sacrifice to her father's wishes were concerned. All interests of the distinctly personal nature were subordin-

(1) Edition, P.45.

(2) Ibid, P.46.

ated to the claims of that symbol of affections. Instinct with tender feelings, her impulses had been controlled by claims, until now satisfying impulse had grown into desire, becoming the motive to all action. Her father and his purposes became her tradition in which she lived with religious devotion. The beam of tenderness from that sightless face furnished her happiness.

Her father had strengthened the influence of her traditional environment by keeping her "aloof from the debasing influence of her sex, with their sparrow-like frivolity and enslaving superstition" (1). But he could not make her the placid product of that environment. She had the intellectual acumen of a classic student, but there was sufficient imagination and wealth of the emotional to make her a mystic. Through the ancient lore she had acquired a reverence for the natural that raised human relations to the plane of moral impulses, but her mystical nature found no satisfying expression in its wearisome tenets. Hence, she went outside the home sphere to find the higher motives and spiritual aspiration. It is through this we find her a sympathetic listener to Fra Girolamo.

Her brother Dino possessed that vein of mysticism in stronger form. As a consequence he had learned to look upon worldly wisdom as a snare to the soul. With his supra-spiritual consciousness, he found no valid sanctions outside the cloister's pale; his imagination had to make real the embodiments of religious impulse. Within that embodied reality his visionary nature lived a transcendental existence. Such conduct to Romola was a concession to worn-out forms and reactionary Shibboleths. She could quite understand him seeking help and even refuge in the Church, but that had become to him an apology for duties of home and kindred, a base evasion of obligations definite and near. She loved him with the affection of a tender-hearted sister, but her disciplined mind despised his meek submission to impulses which she regarded as betraying the

(1) Edition, P.53.

power of God-endowed reason. Still, she clung to his memory with all the sacredness of life.

Two forces entered her life, and were destined to test all the hereditary and traditional resources of her nature. Tito represented that intellectual and aesthetic embodiment, a type of the Renaissance, which fitted into ideals and habits acquired under her father's influence. Savonarola embodied that moral and religious force of which she was conscious the ancient learning did not and could not supply. Her reactions to these are interesting, for they follow a unique course. At first her identity was threatened. Suffused first with the emotions so forcefully aroused by the suavity of Tito, then later with the morally spectacular in Savonarola, she was soon on her way to complete absorption in a Nirvana of submissiveness. But by the time the bed-rock of her nature was touched, her whole self revolted. She could not be untrue to the rational part of her being, and it was to that she clung when all else failed.

In her married life we are brought face to face with the inviolability of heredity and tradition. Romola gave Tito all the love she was capable of, energized her soul in an attempt at sympathetic understanding, and was for a time, as long as interests did not conflict, gradually realizing a united existence. Gradually, however, and almost imperceptibly, alienation took place. Romola sought causes and motives within her own being, but could find nothing to answer as an explanation. Two stages are apparent. The first reaches its climax the night her husband returned with the armor. Romola had before an increasing consciousness that in Tito's life there was a secret she could not share. The chain armor made that suspicion real. His plausible but evasive explanation failed to convince, and for the first time, she felt the lack of genuineness in the man she was linked to for life. Her father had been a man

in whom was "born a hatred and contempt of all injustice and meanness" (1). He could not truckle to share honors won in dishonor. The strength of his scorn of such was equal to martial fury. Hence, how could Romola trust a being, even though it be her husband, in whom existed a secret dread she was not allowed to share?

The second and culminating crisis came when Tito definitely showed his determination to cut her life off from all that which had made it sacred. Her father's library had been her trust and Tito's too, and the wishes of the beloved dead controlled her devotion. To see that realized for which he sacrificed sight, means, and strength, was her soul's hope. Yet Tito with the facile ease with which he had disregarded the significance of entrusted property, struck at the very root of all in which her hopes were laid, by disposing secretly of the musty but precious heirlooms. It was the final break, and from that time affinity became impossible. Though she returns to him, the actuating motive is different, and has been stirred by an outside personality. When she again takes up the task, it is duty calling to self-sacrifice and renunciation, and with this as a purpose she continues her married life until separation is effected by Tito himself.

The magnetism of a strong personality in Savonarola generated by discovery of a mission in life, with all the energies directed to its execution, at first exercised a ghostly influence on Romola. He symbolized the mystical in her nature, and she felt that moral prompting in his presence which asserted authority. The re-charging of Romola's distraught soul on the road to San Marco is done with all the dramatic effect of another St. Paul on the road to Damascus. Savonarola's command reiterated and enlarged the sphere of duty which she had

(1) Edition, P.55.

early learned to follow. As a result, for a time she changes from a child of the Renaissance to a child of the Church. Though she still despises many of its forms and more of its products, Savonarola himself continues to symbolize the spiritual proclivities in her nature. However, it is on the rock of natural affection again that her faith is wrecked. In an effort to save her god-father Bernardo del Nero, she seeks the monk in whom alone rescue lies. It is then she learns his limitations, and feels the disappointment in the lack of genuineness of purpose whereon her trust had been reared. Savonarola appears as another if stronger party power, the negation of that universal hope in which she held confidence. She is not seeking ease in environment, rather an object of devotion and trust.

In the end we see her after the violent reactions to the aesthetic and religious stimuli, seeking to find herself in that social sphere in which our author has all her heroic forms perfect themselves.

#### Realism of the Book.

The "historic obsession" (1), as Saintsbury calls it, marked a strain in realism unnoticed in her earlier books. All the "mild Dutch tone" of her delineations has disappeared. She is now the author of the extreme type. The greyness of character portrayal has given way before the more strenuous efforts she puts forth to create. This somewhat limits her range of the probable. However, in order to be just to this kind of realism, we have to recall the idea of the "purposeful" novel which George Eliot brought more fully into being.

"Romola" can never be a popular book; to a small minority of thinking people it will have its place. Had she treated the subject with the lively descriptive power of Scott and his carelessness regarding historic accuracy, or with the pathos and laughter of Dickens, or even with the scorn of Thackeray, doubt-

(1) "Later Nineteenth Century Literature", Saintsbury: P.115.

less there would have been more of realist life over which to enthuse. But as it is, the reader cannot help but see that apart from the innocent Tessa, and the simple but home-like Brigida, the characters are personified ideas. Add to this that a partial knowledge at least, of the moving figures and scenes is necessary to appreciate the motives and account for results, and the strain upon the imagination becomes boring.

It is not a novel to sit down and read for the interesting situations, or the thrilling adventures. One has to pore over the scenes and trace minutely the forming processes, in order to understand and appreciate the master-stroke of genius and the exhibition of dramatic art. Frederick Harrison, her friend and admirer, stated that to read it as any other novel at a sitting, was to him an impossibility (1). The undeniable strain after the actual historic lessens the romance, while the moral tragedy somewhat dims the outlines of the figures.

There are some scenes very realistic. If one skips the garrulousness of the peddler, and barber, the pictures of the buying and selling, and the information regarding possible spheres of adventure become real. Also the scene between Romola and Tito after the disposal of the library is a realistic and dramatic presentation. Aunt Brigida keeps us down to earth, while Tessa draws us to the countryside. But apart from these few, the general criticism that the characters lack reality and the scenes depth and intensity may be accepted as correct.

There is a realism, however, in which the book does not err. It is that in which the outside events are exactly correlative to the inward feelings and impulses. Here there is no danger of mistaking the real for the shadowy. Baldisarre cannot be anything else than embodied revenge, and he acts according to the dictates of a remorseless Nemesis. Tito with unerring deliberation expresses

(1) "Essays on Literature", Harrison: Article on Romola.



that character which small but accumulated selfish choices will form. Romola is the real embodiment of that force of heredity and tradition which finds its best impulse in social relations. Thus we find it more realistic psychology than psychology in realism. Judged by these, the book reveals itself true to life,- to that inner life which George Eliot read with the divination of the clairvoyant.

CHAPTER VI."FELIX HOLT": 1866.

A return to scenes of memory and history. The industrial classes as a formative factor of public opinion, bring the meaning of the term under discussion. Selfishness in the Transome home is un-social and brings the retribution of despair. The "Malthouse Yard" religious fervor though intense is narrow, consequently lacking the social qualities. Felix Holt, an embodiment of rational impulse, fused with social sympathies, emphasizes the only real quality of public opinion and thus becomes the Ideal Citizen. Mob society reveals the response of the lowest instincts to suggestions. The realism is sadly affected by improbable reactions, and the usual "sympathetic rendering" lacks the experience vital to social conditions.

FELIX HOLT: 1866.

In this novel our author enters the realm of the contentions. The tranquil and harmonious now give place to an environment in which antitheses appear, views become more pronounced, and the evident purpose at times overshadows the art. Human emotions before had been presented mainly within the province of individuals and related to a particular type of society or domestic relations. Now, though she returned to those home scenes which memory made realistic, and artistic effort continued lively description, conditions are introduced which require pronounced reactions. Agitations within the social sphere test the social ideals, man's instinct for power clothes itself in a situation alive with dramatic force, while the conflict of emotions evolves a contrast in impulse, all the way from sturdy savagery to idealistic activity.

George Eliot had lived through this period of great reform movement, and had been old enough at the time to recognize the dormant forces brought into play even in the out-of-the-way places. Her experiences since then had also acquainted her with the way in which the issues at stake seriously affecting the national existence, had resulted in strenuous efforts being shown in one direction to quell the movements, and in the other to carry them to fruition. During these periods, classes of society generally repressed and ignored had been courted and even caressed, and their so-called wishes became public mandates. The rapid industrial development of the century had increased those forces now looming above the political horizon, and ominous to the more conservative minds.

In the account of her life by Mr. Cross, in the time prior to and during the

writing of this book, the names of Spencer, Huxley, Besant, Congreve, Harrison and Comte appear more frequently. (1) Meetings of several of these at her own home, together with the critical study of the literary works of most, may account for the stronger philosophical tone, the ethical concept, and the more strained psychological analysis. During this time also, another reform was in the air. The forces loosened by the 1832 movement, were now expressing those tendencies shadowed in the earlier struggle. The mistakes also had appeared. "It is not surprising then that the hopes and ambitions of many thousands of workers were rudely disappointed, that the struggle to live became fiercer as time went on, that competition became a prominent feature in industrial life" (2). Thus Worts in "Modern Industrial Conditions" sums up the results of all the forward movement. The toll of strikes and riots resulting from the surreptitious growth of Unionism were ominous to lovers of law and order. These dark days called into play all the reactions of stable progress. To the cultured and serious-minded of the later 19th century, the undisciplined and apparently ungovernable control of such a rising force as labor threatened to engulf the nation in ruin. True that Disraeli, Dickens and Kingsley opened the eyes of the public to the sordid evils of the days, or to the magnificent but isolated instances of idealistic effort, but Arnold, Ruskin and Carlyle saw no solution to the problem in the vortex of class strife which enfranchisement had fomented. (3)

If knowledge of the world "consist chiefly in a power of estimating the average force of men's vulgar or selfish appetites, instincts and interests, it must be admitted that in such knowledge the author - of Felix Holt is not deficient" (4). George Eliot was among that number that attempted to read the basis of impulse

(1) "Life & Letters", Cross: P. 445-500.

(2) "Modern Industrial Conditions", Worts: P.76.

(3) "Social Ideals in English Letters", Scudder: P.216-240.

(4) "Studies in Literature", Dowden: P. 285.

behind the movements, and make suggestion for their effective control. But I am afraid her analysis too flagrantly endorses the viewpoint of the class of society in which she now moved. Though her early associations had been enshrined amid the influences of ennobling labor, it is a question whether she ever fully understood the haunting shadows of domestic insecurity. The country laborer, or even the small town commercial class cannot initiate one into the experiences of the "employed". Hence, though she appeared always to sympathize with the uneducated, and the struggling, hand-to-mouth existence of the lower strata of workmen, nothing is more artificial or aloof than her observations of the Sproxton miners. Treby Magna is a bit of sweet-scented English scenery, but its edging of coal pits suggests the dirty fringes of a beautiful dress trailing in the mud. The unsightly excavations, cheap cottages, and drink-sodden workmen are an environment in which she does not expect the finer emotions to appear. In fact, they are made an example of the rough, uncouth undisciplined and misguided forces, little above the barbarous and bestial.

These two villages are an embodied contrast of social forces, stable and unstable, natural and artificial. They are the reflex of that new consciousness of power already expressing itself after the political upheavals of the first great victory of the liberal, fighting forces. Both places supply an opportunity for established political trickery. In the old world society, of Treby, as well as at the more artificial Sproxton, old prejudices are still alive, giving credence to the wildest slogans, and the form of plausibility to the vilest party roguery. The one is an effete civilization, however, and the other is an unnatural irruption of animal instincts, the collision of which produces no meliorated conditions.

It is in such a medium that Felix Holt moves. All the leading characters are as usual types of forces operating at the time, and the reader cannot help

but feel the prominence given to those conditions which will secure the required emphasis of traits. The contrasts are obtained by placing in a more lurid glare, the conflicting elements in a social environment where discontent may be used to secure furtherance of private interests. Sufficient variety, however, is maintained in ordinary human relations to tone down the political emphasis. The story presents one of her few unified plots, but the vein of legal chicanery, together with the extreme type of character, strain the realism more than in any of her former productions.

All the characters appear with their particular bias, and are not allowed to be long upon the stage before they reveal the proclivities in their natures, or the conditions which indicate the forces operated to produce them. Little development is noticed in any of them except along the line choice has already decided. There is the usual elaborate explanation of the factors affecting decisions. Reactions to moral courage are displayed in their far-reaching consequences, also the influence upon environment, of the exercise of sensual motives. Mental processes of which we are given an insight unfailingly result in emotional moods creating the disposition summed up in attitude or character. These moods, whether the result of past choice, or ground for future action, are the realm in which happiness or misery arises, and refulgent hope or lymphatic despair issues, according to the irreversible law of the nature of the act.

Two rather pronounced instances are given of the train of associations resulting from past choice. The first is presented in these words: "There are glances of hatred that stab and raise no cry of murder; robberies that leave man or woman forever beggared of peace and joy, yet kept secret by the sufferer - committed to no sound except that of low moans in the night, seen in no writing except that made on the face by the slow months of suppressed anguish and early morning tears"

(1). Such is the threnody of Mrs. Transome's entrance into the story. We

(1). Edition, .8.

know her history ere we meet her. As she awaits her long-absent son's approach with nervous excitement, we feel we are watching a tragic heroine. Disappointment follows a closer view, for belief in those super-qualities is dispelled, though the necessary determination and purpose are still present. It is a story of wrongly-directed impulse amid circumstances tragical to a woman of haughty and imperious temperament. With an imbecile husband and a rakish son, the product of heredity, together with an estate over whose dubious title "the lawyer had his picking", Mrs. Transome had developed the tiger instincts. But her wariness was of that kind which held on to situations once dear. She had been a woman with desires which touched the roots of instinctive emotions. Accompanying these were powers of will unallied to moral courage. A mother's righteous ambition had caused the sacrifice of sanctities life holds sacred. As a result she had lived in forlorn hopes,-- the wreckage of self-esteem. Though still possessing the impulse for mastery over her returning son, she could not exercise it. That sole power left to her was now useless, and the emotion of that powerful desire turned within herself the fierce light of its former wrongful use. His presence now became memory active as a cankerworm eating away life's sacred delights. Had she lacked sentiment, her very determination might have carried her through, and avoided that tendency to brood over the faithless trust imposed upon a shrewd and unscrupulous business man like Jermyn. But now the continuous depression resulting in "moans in the night", (1) and that sense of entire destitution of soul, found no remedial activity in efforts of renunciation. Her life became an anguish of desolation, increased by the disappointment in a son showing no filial relations to traditions dear to herself, and with a mysterious offspring, another mark of separation from her life. She fades into the darkness of oblivion created by her selfish ambition in ignoring the claims of the family sanctities. Though she plays but little part in the main issues of the book, she is part of that environment to which

(1) Edition, P.8.



the life-giving choice of Esther which has in it all the hopes of spiritual enrichment and soul satisfaction, forms a striking contrast.

"There is no private life which has not been determined by a wider public life" (1). The nature of that response to that determination creates the destiny of the soul. George Eliot has presented us with the range of degrees of that response with the consequent results from that fundamental law of being. Mrs. Transome attempted a negation of the truth when she chose from that "wider public life" only that which lay within her own particular inclination, and desire in reaching its purpose became desolation.

In the Rev. Rufus Lyons, however, we have another phase, even of the widest response in a narrow circle of activities. This "sympathetic picture of dissent" takes us again into the psychology of the religious consciousness. While the phenomena remain unchanged we see the phases of religious faith and feeling are entirely in harmony with her naturalism. From the crudest form to the noblest and purest expression, the motives find their source in that redeeming love for mankind. Hence, though "Malthouse Yard" religion is deficient in breadth and social outlook, it lacks nothing in fervor. The very energy/<sup>of</sup> its devotion isolates its fellowship, until it naively regards itself as the favored elect, and the outside world a concession to the lower-mindedness and hopelessly unspiritual, but nevertheless it is a response to the piety springing from an unbroken past.

In the old minister, however, whose affections had once through the stimulus of pity got the better of his sacred acts and dogmas, there is a vein of real social humanism. Though obsessed with a piety which attempts to inculcate a God-consciousness into everything, there is a wholesome regard for the more human relations. The story of him struggling for the beautiful French derelict, Annetta Landrau, amid obloquy and self-denunciation, is a picture of the real man (1) Edition, P.44.

true to the vital essence of his religion. All his discursive mentality, which ponderates conversation, - an equal effort to <sup>a</sup> dissertation of Rabbinical exegetics, - cannot hide that tender parental passion for his adopted daughter. Intuitive sympathy softened his mental rigidity until he with the honesty of experience, sees that even others may be the "recipient of His grace".

It is to this reaction, born of instinctive regard for fellow mortals in distress that Felix Holt appeals. All those high, but so-called "natural motives" which had actuated the old man in an incident, misinterpreted by the Puritanic sphere of his labors, he now sees embodied in this sincere, direct and somewhat brusque-speaking young man. Evangelical bias <sup>him</sup> caused to read Felix as misguided, but he never doubted the source of the inspiration of those high ideals, rugged devotion to truth, and sacrifice for conscious purpose. At the same time that he satisfied his conscience he was seeking fuller light for the young man, he was conscious of an affinity of motive which made Felix a complement of himself. Hence, the attachment which strengthened as environment repressed ardent political ideals, even as his own had spurned himself in the hour of his own highest expression.

Heredity can account for the ultra-liberalism of Harold Transome, but it can hardly find explanation for the character or radical views of Felix Holt. A young man with striking person, born of poor parents turned quacks; himself apprenticed, as the manner was, to a country doctor, is hardly the type George Eliot chooses to make a captain of social forces. It is in the realm of tradition that he finds his purpose in life.

The story of his conversion, as given to Mr. Lyons, is of the utilitarian variety. Entirely lacking in the element of the emotionally dramatic, it offers no explanation by means of supersensuous powers. No cataclysmic crisis of realistic torment did he experience; it was the sober appeal of reason to

his judgment. In that Glasgow garret "clothed and in his right mind", he faced the worth of human desires. Immediate and sensual pleasure appeared in its meretricious character, and became husks "unfit for men". The appeal of the heroic amid the ordinary decided his choice, and he rose up, left all, and followed the new gleam. That was the "upshot of his conversion", as detailed to his aged friend. As a result of this change of purpose, the laborer and his lot decided the province of his affections. From a line of handicraftsmen he had come, and amid their sorrows and joys he would find his sphere of labor and the expression of his social impulse. Such a definite and far-reaching choice could be carried out only by moral courage and pronounced methods. It required energized effort to launch the impulse, a means of aligning it with all the other motives of life, and such publicity as should make retraction a dishonor. (1) This was secured by the line of action followed out. Felix returned home, forsook his professional bent, emphatically declared his intentions in blunt speech, and began the application of his moral rectitude right within his own home. He injected decisiveness into his attitude when he refused to allow his mother to trade upon the gullible public with medicines no better than "bottled ditch water". At the same time, with the trade of jeweller he sought to replenish the home exchequer.

Through Felix, in the ennobling views of labor, the deprecation of ulterior motives of selfish parliamentarians, and in the subterfuges of trucksters, the disparagement of rights, and the place of public opinion as a greater force in public reform than the popular ballot, we have the formulated doctrines of George Eliot's social gospel. He brings all schemes, creeds and professions before the bar of a sensitized social conscience. The narrow, but strong religious fervor,

(1) "Psychology", Angell: "Three Rules for Habits", P.76.

with its bedevilled world and cyclonic millennialism, was too much of a suggestion of a "city yet to come" to be a program of events here. Yet no hope could be entertained from the national Church, or the aristocratic party either, toward his theory of social development. He scorned nothing of the truth in them, but their far-away heaven of rapture missed the bigger truth of the near and pressing.

This impact of ideals upon a low environment gives us the author's "ideal citizen" (1). The truth of an acquired past expresses itself in habits in conformity to its simplicity and motives as pure as they were humble. It results in a steadfast endeavor to ameliorate the conditions forming home life. He takes orphans to his home and cares for them, he labors with his hands for the right to live. But it is amid the drunkenness, ignorance and grime of the Sproxton miners that he applies the broader social theories. The beerhouse became his "academy", and in its social spirit, by means of casual but adroit turns in conversation, he seeks to expand that "social spirit" to take in the larger duties of life of which theirs is now a *disfigurement*. The coming election decides the trend of his efforts and he attempts to prevent the insidious coercion of mob force to purposes base and villainous. Economic and moral enlightenment, both in public-house and night-school, is used as a means of raising the motives of their lives, and thus enriching the sordid existence of men besotted with dust and drink. By inculcating a sense of duties to be performed, an attempt is made to substitute responsibility for the growing consciousness of rights and privileges. But the content of the workers' minds did not respond to the stimulus of a chimera of an enlightened and quickened public opinion of serious-minded men. The psychology of the "employed" class eluded even the idealistic Felix.

All the trouble followed through the success of the election agents, and his own failure to raise the standard of ideas of the working man. The result was the

(1) "George Eliot", Stephen: Chap.M., "Felix Holt".

negation of unsullied efforts. But in the Treby Magna crowd of drunken and enraged miners, we have our author's attempt to display the mob spirit. From the first it appeared under the control of demagogues who understood the miners' life better than Felix. It had all the earmarks of one created for the purpose of presenting reaction to different suggestions. For a time Felix with the rest had the opportunity of listening to a dispassionate curbstone orator pleading for annual parliaments, popular franchise, paid members, etc.,--all the Chartist program of '48, but though interested, the miners inflamed by drink, were not in a mood for programs. Gregariousness provided the conditions in which the other allied destructive instincts could be stimulated, and to this, inflamed passions gave insensate fury. Felix was lacking in the general grasp of mob rule. He was too much of a humanitarian, with too subtle powers of intellect to interpret life in the terms of miners' instincts, and had too little experience of a laborer's lot to realize the suppressive power of twelve to fifteen hours working day for a mere pittance. His knowledge of economics did not assist him to recognize that mob violence was only the clash of animal pugnacity with another form of brute control. When he did compromise with the mob spirit, his motives could not help but be misinterpreted in the light of that animal passion which colored environment.

The by-products of those political movements provided the sphere of reactions where our author was more at home. The unquenched sincerity of pure motives, high ideals, and worthy purposes, with the challenge of absolute truthfulness, allied to a willingness to suffer for conviction's sake, acted as a conscience to Esther. It sifted the vanities in her nature, and supplied the impulse to enter the same "fellowship of suffering", and sacrifice inclination for the ideal ends in social service. Harold Transome's radicalism appears selfish and shallow in the light of contrast. From "a mere business concession to

future profit", he reacts with a higher though quieter form of life.

The intense emotion of the episode somewhat dies down in the final picture of domestic bliss. Felix' purpose now appears as the creation of a home environment, rather than the application of a universal panacea for all political ills.

CHAPTER VII."MIDDLEMARCH": 1871-2.

A study in the repression of ideals. Dorothea, a type of moral idealism, and Lydgate, a type of the professional, each finds failure in a social environment where the elements of mediocre provincialism prevent idealistic expression. Bulstrode's idealism is tainted as a result of moral and religious perversity. He is considered as a picture of entangling motives with expediency as the controlling purpose. The pictures of country life are nearer to the real than the other "later books", the Garth family particularly adding genuineness to the narrative.



"MIDDLEMARCH": 1871-2.

"I don't see I can leave anything out, because I hope there is nothing that will be seen to be irrelevant to my design, which is to show the gradual action of ordinary causes rather than exceptional, and to show this in some directions which have not been from time immemorial the beaten path" (1) In this excerpt from a letter, George Eliot wrote to her publishers regarding criticism of this novel, we see the range of her efforts to lie within the realm of the obvious. Main characters are kept in a situation common to the distinctly English local scenery. Those "ordinary causes", however, actuate to wider interests, more profound emotions, and are dominated by stronger moral laws than were usual to such a canvas. The situation pulsates with the early Victorian Era economic development, and its variety of types is but the range of reactions to social forces insistent at that period.

The intention at first was to write a story about "Miss Brooke", and to call it by that name, but the work grew in our author's mind until the original project almost lost its identity. Hence we have a novel grouped around three pairs of lovers, each pair of which would in themselves supply all the associations for a pretentious effort. However, it is around the character first conceived that the psychological forces gather, and though at times, she is apparently lost sight of, influence is felt all the way through, for the radiations are of the same soul activity.

Analysis of those forces which supply motives, is a strain carried through the entire work, while the consequences of certain reactions within the various individuals tend to prolixity of treatment. There are, however, three embodiments of the dominant forces, psychological and moral,-- Dorothea, Lydgate and

(1) "Life & Letters", Cross; P. 561.

Bulstrode. They are variations of that project begun in Maggie,-- the struggle for ideal expression, in these cases more or less failures. In two of these failures lies within the realm of emotions primal and elevating; in the other, failure follows a particular subversion of emotive power to a wrong ethical concept. The environment in which these struggles are portrayed must bear the larger responsibility for their non-success.

Dorothea: a study in repressed zeal.

The "Saint Theresa" prelude sets forth the principal theme. Consequently she is brought upon the scene with her ideal nature already matured. Moral impulse is already decided, the bias in the proclivities clear and pronounced, the choice of action alone allowing for spontaneity. Even this last, though at all times free, is scarcely considered as untrammelled, for circumstances give to choice the color of coercion. But she was born out of due season into a period of disintegrating faiths and of social forces still unorganized.

Very little is given of the hereditary forces which contributed to her passionate nature. Evidently the family had been a long-established one of country gentry. Their roots we are told reached back to Puritan days. In fact, she is declared indebted to the forceful stock for the severe morality she assayed, and for the vein of idealism struggling within her soul. Following her prototype, St. Theresa, she early showed that ardor in which idealism is born, but without the circumstances in which it could grow and bear its fruit of heroic activity. She ~~she~~ was the extraordinary girl in ordinary surroundings. With Celia the acquiescent, and her uncle Mr. Brooke, in whom "the hereditary strain of Puritanic energy was clearly in abeyance", she had little in common. Her theoretic mind, yearning after lofty conceptions, "enamored of intensity and greatness, rash in embracing whatever seemed to her to have those aspects, likely to seek martyrdom, to make retractions, and then to incur martyrdom after all in a quarter where she had not sought it"(1), led her to a love of extremes not likely to be regarded as safe for

(1) Edition, P.4.

a young lady in the sedate country parish of Tipton. Such eccentric agitations displayed themselves in praying fervidly by the sick bed of a laborer, to whims of Popish fastings, and to devour theological books. It was from this side of her nature we get her anxieties of the spiritual life with consequent sentiments that "made the solitudes of feminine fashion appear as occupation fit for Bedlam."

In spite of this serious-mindedness which suffused all religious ideas with emotional fervor, she indulged the native impulse to rational enjoyment. Horse-back riding was enjoyable in a pagan, sensuous manner, though corrected by an anticipation of renouncing it. Privileges of birth and fortune never led her beyond the point of renunciation marked by the philanthropic. Qualms of conscience might accompany any physical expression of the instincts, but the social questions were met by the realization of stewardship in wealth.

This expansiveness of her emotional nature, uncontrolled by the lack of family influence, produced unreal views of marriage. An amiable, handsome lover would be unendurable. To a girl who regarded the "judicious Hooker, or Milton with his odd habits" (1), as a "glorious piety to endure", marriage must be a worship to the point of loss of identity. She was little likely to find such a specimen in the effete civilization of an out-of-the-way parish. However, that idea of a "father husband, who would teach you Hebrew if you wished" was found in an adjoining parish.

Dorothea's marriage to Casaubon cannot but be regarded by every reader as a disappointment. It touches the far-fetched. But viewed from the light of her nature it is within the realm of probability. To such a mind, seeking ideal expression, there comes the all-compelling question of the ends of life. These so varied in form and wrapped in unheroic surroundings are scarcely visible. How likely, then, that one whose whole being was suitable for passionate devotion,

(1) Edition, P.6.

should color an old fossil with all the gravity and lustre of impressible piety! His name stood for profound learning, precise views, and an enamoring devotion to august effort, engaging all his priceless energies. That which would be to us a ridiculous waste became to her fervid nature a holy purpose. He appeared as the outlet of all her pent-up energy in devoted service. To her the supervising of an infant school, or parish philanthropic efforts, were small compared to the opportunity offered in this cloistral solemnity of domestic endeavor. Emotion surging round these rational ideas supplied the strength of highest motives when she entered the hall of Lowick as a wife.

The failure of Dorothea's marriage must not be laid any more to her husband than to herself. The trouble lay in that illusion common to both, for both entered that state with sincere intentions. She expected a life of service within the realm of sympathies; he looked for a belated complement to his incomplete existence. She mistook his abstraction for an adorable genuineness and religious abstinence from artificiality; he mistook his shallow rill of emotion for a flood that would soften his phlegmatic temperament. Both could not but be disappointed, for to Dorothea absorption in his personality was an impossibility, while to him youth, fervor, and spontaneous sympathy had ever been absorbed in Mythological profundities.

She tried to adapt her resisting faculties to her new environment. Many instances are given of her endeavors in which she introspectively analyzed anew all her motives and purposes, to see if she were to blame. Somehow or other, things would not shape themselves to produce harmony, and consequent peace of mind as a result of sustained motives. The honeymoon itself is portrayed as the first check to her sensitive nature. Gasaubon lived a life she could not share, habits fixed and determined entirely outside her experiences. Though she endeavored to comfort herself in the hope of a sympathetic share in his labors, the very nature to those labors forced her into the relation of secretary rather than wife. Not

even those foundations of opinion she expected to give stability to her own, could her husband impart. His objectified aloofness prevented any intimacies of conversation in which her views might be of value. His lengthened and labored discourses on the controlling and directing power of a husband, froze all the questioning impulses in her nature, and she fell back upon the same unsatisfied desires, so prominent in her pre-marriage state. Lacking sympathetic union wherein life finds its highest ends, Dorothea failed to render that devoted service spontaneously offered. Casaubon formed that environment which repressed her ideal tendency and mortified her soul.

Ladislaw, that remembrance of an unfortunate disinherited relation of her husband, appeared to Dorothea as an embodiment of the yearning she felt at the contemplation of her forlorn hopes. This "mercurial adventurer", with the Byronic flamboyant passion and formless Shelley idealism, was more in harmony with her than any other she met. It was from him she became disillusioned in her pedantic husband. His gratitude for duty rendered did not prevent him from adversely criticizing his benefactor, and placed his motives to marriage in the light of common esteem. His unorganized impulses supplied a spontaneity, which reacted as a spring of activity in herself. He had the same enthusiasm for vastness and intensity, the same yearning effort after the publicity of martyrdom, and a stronger irritation at the thought of the regular and concrete. No wonder an affinity, for a time clandestine, sprang up between them,

Strange to say, the surreptitious association revealed a vein of sordid narrowness in Dorothea's husband. His developing jealousy increased the gulf between them and made a sympathetic understanding all the more impossible. His control of her finer emotions weakened, but he held power over one affection which made a trait in her character,-- her fidelity to a trust. Hence, he moved to bind her interests to his life by eliciting a promise regarding the trust of his life's

work. Fortunately, this was forestalled by his immediate death, not, however, before he had given concrete expression to his jealous feelings in his selfish will.

Widowhood left her chastened by disappointment, but with the same impulsive offerings to environment. Had she still been placed amid events demanding intensity, she might have become an Elizabeth Fry, or a Florence Nightingale. But she appeared doomed to spend her vast emotions improving cottages, questioning wearied mothers about sick children, and supplying impoverished laborers with pigs. In fact, her emotional passivity engenders a little impatience in the reader, but her environment is kept where its subjecting influences are seen to produce no harmony with desires.

Three more important reactions are shown in Dorothea. The first is where she meets Lydgate in the capacity of a mere philanthropist. Possibly it is in the light of the effect of her presence upon him, that we see her best presented. She is almost an angel of light to him. He had been conscious of her unselfish devotion to her husband, had felt the strength of unswerving purpose in her life, which condemned his own weakness. Before her personality, made strong by sympathetic impulse, Lydgate broke down his reserve, and confided the secrets of his lot. Not even to his wife had he admitted so much. Dorothea understood him, for she reacted to the tone of that effort defeated by circumstances, quelling the same high emotions. Her trust in him became stronger than that of his wife, and for a time revitalized his noble purposes. Incidentally, it aroused the practical response in her nature, through which his work appeared not only as an object of mercy, but as a duty to be done. Thus she sought to help him with his burden. She even agreed to interview his wife and to re-establish, if possible, her trust in her husband.

It is when Dorothea and Rosamond meet that the best contrast in the book is

apparent. Rosamond becomes conscious of a strong, beautiful personality, not actuated by selfish ambition or mere desire for personal happiness. The nobler impulses impress to carry sincerity in the tone of voice and the straightforward carriage of her being. Dorothea's very efforts in all their obviously unselfish genuineness were a reproach to the narrow and shallow desires of Rosamond to shine in every sphere she moved in, and her determination to make circumstances contribute to her own careless happiness.

The latent force of sacrifice and renunciation for high endeavor did not spend itself in her first marriage. She did lose trust in Ladislav at the sight of apparent triviality in the compromising situation in the Lydgate home. But the haunting memory in Will reacted with stoning effort, reinstating trust in her. The same tendency to complete abandonment to the ideal form which had caused the first mistake, prompted her to marriage union with Ladislav. The portrayal of that increasing strength of affection before which all resilient purpose faded is very elaborate, but it all summed up in the necessity of finding sympathy and enlarging love for a nature precipitously passionate. Ladislav is presented as the only object in her environment to whom Dorothea could cling for the support of its ardent affections. Thus we have the delineation of a heroic nature stumbling in a mediocre environment, yet supplying by unheroic acts, the momentum of the past to ensure the stable progress of our civilization.

Lydgate: a tragedy of abortive professional impulse.

This time our author carried her powers of analysis into the distinctly professional realm. It is a sphere where imagination and reflective genius is somewhat restricted. Her insight, however, did not fail her, for her wide experience acquired later on in life with this branch of professionalism, gave abundant opportunity for judging the ethics as well as the motives of the calling. To us in these days, the old blood-letting, drug-dispensing practitioner and apothecary



appear as a mediaeval anomaly. But in the career of Lydgate, we have the story of a piece of real history of that chequered struggle that now honored profession passed through to increase prestige and efficiency.

The tendency to regard the extending influences of choices in the ethical sphere, is applied to a life's work and dreams. In Lydgate we have no overpowering traditional environment giving a bent to purpose evolved out of education. We see an early proclivity in his nature to regard all knowledge from a scientific standpoint, but few hereditary forces are shown in family relationships shaping his impressionable years. He was simply "one of the rarer lads who early get a decided bent and make up their minds that there is something particular in life which they would like to do for its own sake, and not because their fathers did it" (1). His ready understanding, not yet kindled into an intellectual passion, regarded knowledge as a superficial affair easily mastered. But from the casual reading of a book of anatomy, his already cultivated interest took on a scientific turn which soon developed a professional enthusiasm.

Intellectual ardor of his nature prompted him farther in his efforts to seek that preparation for his chosen task, which would equip him to render a worthy contribution. It generated also an idealism in his professional purposes, until men like Jenner and Bichat became his models and inspiration. As a consequence, his youthful zeal gave impetus to his ideas, while careful scientific training engendered a caution to avoid the pitfalls so numerous in his chosen work. Nothing was more natural than that he should be enthused with a desire toward important discoveries that would again revolutionize the process of medical knowledge. Finances had not worried him so far, and with the outlook before him of being definitely settled in his practice, no ulterior motive for lucre as a necessity would present itself to mar the noble impulse under which he intended to act.

(1) Edition, P.127.

In his "ambitions for social distinction, so generous and unusual in his views of social duty" (1), there lay conspicuous "spots of commonness". Men of genius often lack disciplined judgment in spheres outside that in which their special powers operate. Lydgate was an example of this narrowness of training. "That distinction of mind which belonged to his intellectual ardor did not penetrate his feeling and judgment about furniture and women, or the desirability of its being known (without his telling) that he was better born than any other country surgeon" (2). This failing had already received one reminder in Paris during his student days. A "remote impersonal passion" for the beauty of a cruel-hearted actress, had in his infatuation received a check as strong as his passion was vehement. From this experience he emerged with the consciousness of "two selves within him,- and they must learn to accommodate each other and bear reciprocal impediments" (3).

Middlemarch supplied the environment where Lydgate's professional idealism was to find its practical expression. The situation was promising,- a new hospital for newer systems, entirely separated from the old, provided an ideal opportunity for his technical purposes. It was in the realm of the social sentiment, however, which the new doctor had not taken into account, that we find the impediment which became an obstacle. A provincial town with its self-contained existence is likely to harbor exceedingly narrow prejudices, a social life which fosters cliques and parties, and moral standards which overshadow professional disinterestedness. Add to this that Lydgate's peculiar interests were too divided between a personal care for his patients and an impersonal attitude toward his scientific efforts, and we have elements that are sure to conflict.

The test soon came, and in a quarter least expected. He failed to see how so much should depend upon his association with a moral exile like Bulstrode,

(1) Edition, P.134. (2) Ibid. P. (3) Ibid. P.136.

so long as professional purposes were aided, resulting in beneficent activity to the people. How little then should depend upon any preference he might have to show in a vote for ecclesiastical recognition with the hospital! But it was here Lydgate showed that fatal disregard for moral courage which in such a community colored his professional skill.

From this time the "common spots" became increasingly prominent. His marriage to the selfishly beautiful and trivially clever Rosamond, craving for happiness irrespective how it came, and his tender solicitude for her desires, all embroiled him in the toils which he had intended sedulously to avoid. His motives still remained as pure and strong as ever; his purposes dominated all his work; but all his efforts toward the ideal were frustrated by the corded complication of the tightening financial strain. Had Rosamond supplied sympathy and affiliation with his designs, retraction might have been possible, and steps might have been retraced until the thread of his life's purposes might have been regrasped. Instead, however, the struggle even to live became a dominant passion and soon left him a fit subject for the religious chicanery of his benefactor.

When social sentiment had stamped the death of Raffles with compromise of professional ideals, the battle was over, and environment had won, for the lack of moral impulse had left him a prey to the strategy of prejudice.

Once again, as he stands before the embodiment of noble impulse in Dorothea, Lydgate sees the shadow of departed hopes. But his confession is an admission of chronic truth. Temptation has been to him a subtle suggestion along the line of the "common spots", and had undermined that stronger impetus without which plodding and patient effort can never reach its just reward. All his idealism had frittered away in an emotional surrender to an uninspiring environment. The misdirected energy of Casaubon was pathetic, but the subversion of Lydgate is a tragedy. Keen mental powers, technical knowledge, native ingenuity,

and energizing impulse, all appeared helpless before the sweet winsomeness of a scheming wife to whom he was devoted. Dorothea's yearnings had been starved by her husband's frigid profundity; Lydgate's were suppressed by the very devotion which in the ordinary life is itself a destination. Hence, the native hue of resolution was sicklied over with the pale of the ordinary, until he himself was lost in its colorlessness.

Bulstrode: the religious charlatan.

What opportunity or purpose did not permit our author in "Silas Marner", has been carried out to fruition in "Middlemarch". Bulstrode is a development of the William Dane characteristics, placed in a realm where that special type could be seen at its best,-- or worst. Within her own experience would come the material necessary. In fact, George Eliot appears perfectly at home analyzing all the mental chicanery, showing reaction and effect upon environment.

When we see him first, Bulstrode is engaged in that beneficent activity which should make a man honored in his day and generation, and revered by succeeding ages. He had the philanthropic spirit in all its practical expression. The hospital of which he was the presiding genius, gave him in its benevolence, prestige and power. He was known for his munificence toward all worthy causes, and the readiness with which he responded to all official activities. The fact that he was a banker of no small capacity and interests in the district added to his social as well as financial influence. His general demeanor as well as his conduct, colored by a grave religious morality, placed his purposes beyond the mere thought of worldly gain. It is not until late in life that the lid is removed, and we see the cess-pool his subterfuges have produced in his nature.

His type grew out of those special tenets, the narrow interpretation of which our author appears to regard as a reproach to the catholicity of our Christianity. Evangelical emphasis of imputed righteousness had brought in its wake the premium

on the sinner, and salvation by attitudes of apparent self-abasement; and dependence upon vicarious efforts had afforded a chance for subtle minds to hide ulterior motives behind a belief in the instruments of God's mercy. Stress of punishment in another world carried the danger of blinding us to the Nemesis of our deeds in this. The importance laid on mental assent had proved itself liable to disregard the ethical laws. Special forms of religious expression oft-repeated had tended to become platitudes, which acted as a gymnastic exercise to the emotions, leading to an illusion of motives. The "Glory of God" and "Extension of the Kingdom" had become strategems of religious impulse declining into subsidiary motives lying alongside special inclinations toward imperious control, social prestige, and financial success. Thus religious theories had become warped by mental strategy until they accorded with, or were obedient to lower desires. This is the psychology of that religious cliquism when a materialist nature is covered with a veneer of spiritual ardor.

The crucial test of Bulstrode's moral courage had come when he as a young man, clever and good-looking, had the offer of an advantageous position in a trade he knew bore despicable relations. The impulse to refuse such came from religious pretensions amid a society regarding itself as the "elect of God". Assurance arising from that fervid atmosphere probably strengthened his own inclinations. Its theories lacking broad altruistic expansiveness, failed to give him a comprehensive view of his relations to his fellow men. Farebrother summed up the dangers of such a narrow form as a "worldly spiritual cliquism". Bulstrode's choice was for wealth and position, glozed over by the plausible purpose of "All for the glory of God". Whatever qualms arose from the inconsistency of illicit trade with his ultra-religious reactions were silenced by this Shibboleth.

Such a motive pressed into the service of ambitious desire, requires as its handmaid religious observance. This was carried out with a regularity and de-

votion equalled only by his pious demeanor and ascetic habits. But the demands were heavy. Desire increased with satisfaction until schemes ignored rights in the unfortunate daughter, and countenanced marriage with the widow. Each of the desirable for the end sought marks a stage in the development of the arch-hypocrite. His cloak of humility, reverence, and Christian endeavor became more pretentious until in Middlemarch, it took on the public recognition of Christian benevolence.

Raffles is his resurgent conscience. All the equanimity of his temperament failed before this embodiment of his subversive motives which he had relegated to the scrap-heap by penitent efforts. This was the gentle reminder that results of past actions cannot be removed by merciful pleadings while the thoughts remain on the earth and benefits held tightly in the hands. Desires now became determination; high purposes now gave way before the effort to live and hold his head up in the society in which he had found a respectable place. He tried the subterfuge of compensation to Ladislaw, but that spurned, he sank to wholesale bribery, rather than endure disgrace. His part in the death of Raffles is the correlative of that original motive, strengthened by the elemental desire for safety. His passivity in allowing the doctor's orders to be disobeyed resulting in the death of his tormentor, was the outcome of the habit of desire coercing reason by strategy.

The public conscience, however, was more stable than the private, and before that same appeal, his acts appeared in the light of more rational impulse. The "cant and palaver" religiosity was now regarded as a vehicle of the most diabolical purposes. As a result, the structure of his theories fell and brought others with it; and Lydgate, with his scientific and moral aloofness, fell also. An environment which had cleansed itself of a hideous hypocrisy, also quenched the fires of professional idealism. Lydgate had become woven with the designs of Bulstrode, and in their frustration, he was impugned with the same motives as



his master.

In the last stage, where Bulstrode is preparing for departure, we have in his tenderness for wife and family, a redeeming feature of his impulses. He is still humble and devout; still believing in those higher purposes by which he thought he ever acted. But the haughtiness of his self-confidence has gone, though confession is still impossible. He maintains the role of martyr to the end, with the consciousness that his exile is due to the cross-currents in his moral nature which the direct and superficially, worldly-minded citizens of Middlemarch can never understand.

#### Realism in "Middlemarch".

The pictures of English provincial life in this book are along the line of the social environment expanded in "Felix Holt". Our author has turned away from "those delightful pastorals where the idyllic, the grotesque, and the profoundly human blend in so tranquil a harmony; she describes the stirrings of discontent, the seething of new forces, in the England of the central Victorian Period" (1). It shows how little she regarded the bond to the minutiae of Dutch paintings. Before the word "proletariat" was thought of, we have a bourgeois society of a country town described with every feature of its physiognomy. Country gentlemen, such as "Mr. Brooke and the Chethams, with their mild dilettantism, their lack of purpose and ideals" (2), are stabilized by a somewhat animal capacity for good English beef and mutton, while the town offers the "Bulstrodes and Vineys, painfully devoid of sweetness and light".

Her favorite pictures of dissent as a social force and rudimentary culture are lacking. The distinctly Established type in Farebrother, Cadwallader and Casaubon are trite, unsocial, lacking religious force, and rejuvenating social

(1) "Social Ideals in English Literature", Scudder: P. 184.

(2) Ibid., P. 186.



impulse, consequently ineffective and rather depressing. Still, they help to fill out a complete picture of that stagnant conventionalism which benumbed idealizing energy.

There is infinite variety in portrayal of character, but a number of them are what Saintsbury called "forms in chalk" (1). But these also contribute to that background in which the moral, intellectual, and religious forces in Dorothea, Lydgate and Bulstrode, operate and meet their failure. One could wish some of them had been dealt with more fully, for they afford an opportunity for natural dialogue and clearness of narrative which is a contrast to the extensive analysis and moralizing. The Hackit-Poyser type is continued in Mrs. Cadwallader, but her wit though sharper is more brusque, especially when she describes Casaubon as a "bladder, fit only to rattle peas in". Adam Bede appears in the more mature Caleb Garth. They are all wholesome, however, and add reality to the lively and picturesque countryside.

"Pseudo-scientific jargon"<sup>(2)</sup> is less pronounced and kept within the restraint of artistic choice. In the "hustings" at the election we have a deliciously satirical treatment of the incipient democratic movement, without the snarl of any malicious purpose. Only her natural sympathy, however, seemed to prevent her from fulminating on the pretentious claims. But it forms an ideal picture of the effort of those echoes of economic reform amid a society in which revolutionary enthusiasm finds but a faint response. In the ignorant resistance to the new railway, and the attitude of the country gentry to machine breaking, we recognize an attempt to form a concrete representation of the lingering death of hereditary prejudices.

The strain of the heightened tones of county town life touched artificiality

(1) "History of Nineteenth Century Literature", Saintsbury: P.324.

(2) Ibid., P.323.

which mars spontaneous expression. The general sadness also marks too much the grave and serious spirit of the author. It is, however, enlivened by the melodrama of the Featherstone delusion. This scene is one of the most dramatic in her books, and at the same time shows the restraining influence of her art. Pathos actuated by sympathy again keeps it from the morbid, while keen discernment of character enabled her to keep a balance of emotional forces.

The love scenes are disappointing. In all there is either the boredom of the stilted, or the pathos of the ordinary. The dramatic force of man's affection for a woman appeared to be an unknown quantity to our author. The scenes, however, are saved from grossness and monotony by the moral reflections upon the subject of marriage. High ideals of sex relations held before the reader keeps the background sweet and real. The book is certainly the most realistic of George Eliot's later novels, and considering the range of character and type of incident, it is a most sympathetic treatment of a subject about which it is difficult to write without scorn or scepticism.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### "DANIEL DERONDA": 1876.

Deronda, a study in the evolution of the national spirit in an extreme type. Special proclivities shown in boyhood lacking adequate means of expression until a traditional environment evolves inherited tendencies resulting in idealized energy in apparently lost causes. Gwendolen Harleth, without the anchorage of inherited moral impulse, becomes a prey to selfish desire, finding a moral counterpart in the egoistic and degenerate Grandcourt. Duality recognized in pictures with interactions only in the realm of the conflict of types. Realism suffers very much owing to the highly improbable types and situations. A consideration of the various reactions to these in Margaret Lonsdale, Leslie Stephen, Frederick Harrison and Dowden .

"DANIEL DERONDA": 1876.

In attempting to follow the great formative processes in the characters of the last novel of the series, one is brought face to face with what appears to be George Eliot's greatest constructive effort. In this vast scheme must have been put all the accumulated power of divination and the influence of determinate purpose. It is far too extensive to follow in detail all the ramifications of the plot, or the profundities which go to make up the sum total of the various life forces. The range is felt to be all the way from the life of the Chaldees, where the incipient idea of nationality was first engendered, down through the chequered, but intense history of a people whose hopes and realizations, joys and tragedies, achievements and failures, have at last found an isolated refuge in a bit of English common provincial scenery. In this apparently small and insignificant nucleus is found all the acquired meaning of the past and hope of perpetuation in the future. Such is the sphere in which our author commences and carries to fruition her far-reaching purposes. It is the predominant element in the book, and the reader feels the distinctly English element as subsidiary in illustration and comparison.

It is generally conceded that the book falls naturally into two parts, (1) interesting at intervals, but dependent for that intersection only upon the stronger personality created for the larger sphere. Grandcourt and Gwendolen with their satellites are set over against Mordecai and Deronda. The medium for each set of characters would in itself provide a field for a distinct and separate story. But the interrelation strengthens that unity

(1) "George Eliot", Stephen.

found more in antagonism than in affinity, and more in contrast than in comparison.

In order to reflect the processes exhibited, it will be better to follow the main characters, each in the arena of its operations. Only then can the reader acquire that perspective which enables him to see the purpose relevant. Those who read simply for the story find a sense of disappointment at the apparently widening chasm between persons destined at the commencement to come together. But those who follow in detail the inevitable evolution from each particular psychosis, catch the meaning in the constructive effort, and weep not over lost causes.

Deronda: the evolution of a national spirit.

It is of no use attempting either to apologize for or explain away the author's choice of Judaism as a field for cultivation. Such justification as is necessary is amply made in her "Impressions of Theophrastus Luck"-- "The Modern Hep, Hep, Hep": "A people having the seed of worthiness in it must feel an answering thrill when it is adjured by the deaths of its heroes who died to preserve its national existence; when it is reminded of its small beginnings and gradual growth through past labors and struggles, such as are still demanded of it in order that the freedom and well-being thus inherited may be transmitted unimpaired to children and children's children; when an appeal against the permission of injustice made to great precedents in its history and of the better genius breathing in its institutions".

(1) "It is the living force of sentiments in common which makes a national consciousness. An individual man, to be harmoniously great, must belong to a nation of this order, if not in actual existence, yet existing in the past, in memory, as a departed, invisible, beloved ideal, once a reality and perhaps to be restored".

Such is the priceless legacy of national memories and traditions which attracted the author's faith into acceptance of their perpetuity. By infinite patience

(1) "Modern Hep,Hep,Hep", George Eliot: P.137.

and endeavor she mastered the Hebrew medium, became acquainted with the history and hopes of its people, and caught a glimpse of its program and destiny.

At the time she was brooding over this creation, her views regarding heredity and tradition and environment had become fixed and prominent. No better field could have been chosen to exemplify that particular standpoint than the national history and steadfastness of the Jew. The "multitude possessing common objects of piety in the immortal achievements and immortal sorrows of ancestors who have transmitted to them <sup>a</sup> physical and mental type strong enough, eminent enough in faculties, pregnant enough with peculiar promise, to constitute a new beneficent individuality among the nations, and, by confuting the traditions of scorn, nobly avenge the wrongs done to their fathers" (1). In the light of this atmosphere we see something of the psychic force in Deronda. A child of such a past is a casket of pent-up emotions, inexpressible soul-yearnings, incipient memory processes plaintively seeking parallels in an uncertain environment, and intuitive longings for direction to be given to that unrecognized but conscious force within himself.

Someone has said that character is made in the cradle. In the case of Deronda we have to remove the mould father back. It is not till later on in the book that we come to learn of the more immediate hereditary forces, but we get an expression of that acquired impulse, just as life is opening out into human relations. As to the special instincts of childhood exhibited in the lad we know little, except the evidence given at the age of thirteen. There we see him in ideal surroundings for linking up the past with the present. On that grassy court surrounded on three sides by a gothic cloister, he had the background for all the suggestions from the life behind him. The apparently innocent and knowledge-seeking impulse in the question to Mr. Fraser, his tutor, "how was it that the popes and cardinals always had nephews", supplies the constructive tendency in a precocious child attempting to find an expression of that instinct for parental relationship (1) "Modern Hep, Hep, Hep", Eliot.

which is our first link with life.

It was the questioning age,- the time in which Jesus entered the temple and asked questions every child can, which no one can satisfactorily answer. The earlier imitative and play instincts had given way before the more highly developed constructive powers. Self-complex was seeking direction as a separate entity. Uncle and Aunt were not sufficient to relate a life to existence that plays around us. Imagination of childhood was seeking that ground for fact in experience which paves the way for volitional activities, and native intellectual interests. It was the self feeling too large for the world in which he lived and attempting to push back the horizons.

The newer knowledge brought into relation with his own lot produced an emotional crisis in his sensitive mind, of which the particular conscious result was a care. Its weight of dread revelation became a sombre guest for it continued with its formless meaning to the day his real mother disclosed the secret of his life. Among the faces in the old Abbey gallery he recognized no type as a correspondent to his own, thus increasing the problem of his naturally brooding disposition. This mere figment of his imagination focussed the ardor of his nature. It increased the mystery of possibly gloomy revelation of facts which might be distasteful to a lad brought up in his surroundings. For the first time we are given a view of the impetuosity of his emotions which resulted in a new sense of relation to all the elements in his life.

The reading of historic heroes and listening to musical prodigies left his mind unaffected by the appeal commonly made to all boys. Tastes and nurture separated him from the world of adventure and achievement. To the suggestion that he become a great singer, his reaction was one of repugnance, born of revulsion. His was one of those ardently affectionate natures which must be allowed to find the object which affection shall make vital, and which alone can unfold the powers that



lie therein. Still, he did not rebel against his environment. The claims made upon him to fit into it were met by efforts to prepare him for the life of a gentleman and scholar. What he appeared to resent, or at least to be injured by, was the pious intention to thrust him into an environment for which he had no yearning. The one desire that appeared in consciousness was to be a leader like Pericles or Washington. For his ability to be such we have to depend upon the particular theory of heredity our author sponsored.

Such is the product of our heritage from the past, sanctioned by Darwin, Spencer, Huxley. This is an ideal presentation of it in flesh and blood, toned by art. Evolutionists generally agreed at that time to the theory of transmitted forms, but the self within those forms might not be limited in its expression by the physical peculiarities. Here George Eliot carries the doctrine to its ultimate application. Not only the physical characteristics, but also the psychic functions are determined by inherited tendencies. Deronda's more immediate heredity was that of an artistic, and though self-centred, yet intensely emotional mother, and a truth-seeking but pliant father. Behind these again were the generations of racial characteristics whose ideals had formulated very definite and narrow principles and evolved very concrete purposes. This sensitized, emotional nature in abjuring everything not in accord with it, is the inherited tendency not yet conscious of its direction, but awaiting the awakening process of some concrete revelation which shall give form and meaning to all its impulses. In other words this early susceptibility to premature reflection revealed the general bias given to his whole nature, showing him an almost perfect specimen as a child of his past.

The march to manhood through the regularly subscribed course of a cultural education, was marked more by a desire for wide knowledge than intensive study, a tendency to give motive and opinion a high place as the goal of scholastic effort.

We find that he "had the stamp of rarity in a subdued fervor of sympathy, an active imagination on behalf of others which did not show itself effusively, but was certainly seen in acts of considerateness that struck his companions as moral eccentricity" (1). This together with that hatred of injury, bred of the tinge of dishonor in his own lot, tended to make him less popular, and less fortunate as an object of personal interest. This mood developed a reflecting hesitation regarding honors which might accrue to him. He would rather help Hans Meyrick to the coveted prize than strive for it himself. Such conduct made him the bean ideal of the Meyrick family, and the dread of Gwendolen Harleth, who was the exact opposite to Deronda's unselfish personality.

The impulse to rescue is a common one born of the social instincts of the race. But in Deronda the act appears staged with all the compassion of newly acquired tragic interest. That "impersonation of misery, a girl hardly more than eighteen, of low slim figure,- hands hanging down clasped before her, and her eyes fixed on the river with a look of immovable statue-like despair" blended with the haunting melody of his song. The rescue from the Thames was a natural impulse; it instantly associated in his mind a new impetus of mingled feelings. The forlorn girl he had taken from the water, linked his sympathy somehow with his unknown mother.

It is to this association that we find Deronda's interest was for the first time directed to the Jews. All his experience of such according to our author, was of the common sort. He took it for granted that the learned and accomplished of that race were renegades to their faith, while the ugly stories of Jewish characteristics and occupations had simply elicited the ordinary conclusion that they retained the virtues and vices of a long-oppressed race. One of his special aptitudes, however, had been an increasing insistence upon the indissoluble bond linking past with the present. This had engendered a desire to know the vital con-

(1) Edition, P.162.

nections of knowledge, rather than develop a subtlety of intellectual discernment.

Possessed of a fervor which colored events of everyday life with poetry and romance, this link with a suffering mortal who happened to be a beautiful Jewess, now shaped the hereditary proclivities, and cast them into the form in which he was to find his religion (1). So far his religious experience had been of a quiescent variety. The Ultimate had not challenged his mind to its quest, the here rather than the hereafter had formed his engrossing interest. Not faced with the need to earn his daily bread, his desires had not been focussed upon that Edenism which association tends to stimulate in idealistic natures. Hence, he had no craving to be a demagogue for the social amelioration of the race. Politics as such was carnal to him. Mirah's distress failed to rouse any passion for the elevation of the stage, or for an investigation of the conditions of unfortunate actors and actresses. Mirah became a national consciousness, speaking through the tragedy of its history, the pathos of its forlorn hopes, and the idyllic purity of its epic fervor. "Judaism was still something throbbing in human lives, still making for them the only conceivable vesture of the world" (2).

Exploration of the synagogues and Juden-gasse at Frankfort strengthened those historic fibres of sympathy, and led out his feelings toward the lost causes of the world. At that time he was in his most plastic mood, awaiting impressions which would narrow his desires, and at the same time strengthen them. So far partiality in his longings was impossible; he was also "unable to make himself an organic part of social life, instead of roaming in it like a yearning disembodied spirit, stirred with a vague social passion, but without fixed local habitation to render fellowship real"(3). The coordination of all these forces

(1) Edition, P.184.

(2) Ibid, P.325.

(3) Ibid, P.327.

was to be found in the traditions of that people in whom his hereditary instincts were already finding a home. Unable to definitely choose or even seek an environment, he was to find one along the line of individual interests associated with Mirah.

In response to this simple motive he is led to explore the London Ghetto. There through the agency of an orthodox Jewish family, through whom he is led to see something of the sacredness of the family bond, and the meticulous care in the decadent religious ceremonies, Deronda comes into contact with a mysterious entity, which in himself is almost a disembodied hope,- Mordecai. It is to this spiritual enigma with his fanatic profundities regarding the restoration of Zion as a national centre for far-strewn mortals of his race, that we have to ascribe direction and form in Deronda's zeal. Mordecai finds him a ready and sympathetic listener, and an eager learner. He soon imbibes an interest in the great destiny of this scattered people. So great is this aptitude for feeling toward a suffering and long-oppressed people that Mordecai instinctively regards him with national affinity. With talkative familiarity, he pours into that vague inheritance all the social and spiritual concepts of the down-trodden but determined people. The recognition of their national choice rapidly catches up the ardor of his unexpressed enthusiasm into a belief in their mission. Inherited impulses to know and feel the heart throbs of this people now engenders a desire in the direction of their hopes.

Desire reacting into motive, he was first led simply to know more about them; but that increased knowledge found an echo in his soul which corresponded to the call of its very demand. Deronda at first ignoring Mordecai's assumption that he is a Jew, discovers in the orientation of the term within his mind, no disgrace with such a discovery. In fact, it appears to suggest that justification for that incipient idea for partiality necessary for a social mission, a definiteness to his vague longings, and a local habitation to his fellowship.

Coincident with this is the vitalizing disclosure that he is really one of their race. He learns the story in that retributive confession from his mother, now an Austrian Countess, with interests alien to her real folk. All the inherited tendencies are now given their definite control. Motive is strengthened by the fact of actual relationship. He becomes conscious of a voice in his soul as Mirah had been, with this difference, that with her, it was her mother, with him his father.

From this time on the process of Zionizing Deronda becomes an easy process, because it is within the realm of inclination. Our author has taken us through a labyrinthine maze to lead Deronda into the path of heredity. Now heredity has done its work, and tradition controls the forces of his life. All the customs, habits, outlook and feelings of his natural people, quickly become his own. They now find an abiding place in his life as a religious fervor. That ardent nature which had avoided the political morass, and all the ennui of easy circumstances, now found an idealizing environment for his social passion, and direction for his spiritual impetus. That environment supplied impulse to compassion and service, both dominant and enlightened, craving a duty, but disliking to find one. The duty was an apparently hopeless cause, yet it provided that emancipation which brings life in the service of an ideal such as an effete civilization craves for. Throughout the story, heredity is the shaping force in the determination of that duty, supplying the impulse, tradition the desire, and environment the motive.

Gwendolen Harleth: a study in desire lacking moral impulse.

A direct contrast to Deronda whose roots drew their intellectual and moral nourishment from a vital past, Gwendolen was a "bird of passage" or "ships that pass in the night", or she may be likened to Topsy,- she "just grewed". The scene at the roulette table at the fashionable European pleasure resort where Gwendolen was casting her coins like a nabob, with recklessness and contempt for value, is a picture of primordial instincts appearing through the veneer of

encrusted civilization. At the height of her success she is arrested by the calm, but magnetic look of a stronger personality. In a moment that "firm choice" which had characterized her play was disorganized with consequent loss of all she had made. The question is not what was in the look, but rather the forces that were disorganized in the being thus affected. They were the primal instincts which are native and if undisciplined and not submerged in the larger powers, become shaping influences in life, and on them character may be formed.

Anger and fear combined in that control of movements and ideas. But it is when the family are at Offendene that we see them on their native heath. There we are shown the lack of links of that inheritance which could shape native instincts and evolve them into human relations. Here had been a life without a home which could become the symbol of endearing memories. No bit of native land where the love of tender kinship might have given a meaning to future widening knowledge. All those associations where refining affections could take root had been wanting. (1)

The mother, an imitative, obedient and essentially weak-minded person, showed the only really good qualities in her care for her flagrantly selfish child. This unselfishness had been without vision or control. Consequently the instincts of anger and fear in her daughter were allowed to develop until they had shaped her emotional disposition, regarding her mother first with malignant neglect, later with the same misguided impulse in her care as her mother had shown. Two incidents reveal the selfish direction of her instincts. When her mother in the cold night, seeks a remedy for pain, her spoiled child petulantly refuses to rise from her easy bed to attend her. At another time, in a fit of exasperation, she had strangled her half-sister's pet canary. True, she bought a pet mouse in retribution, but penitential humiliation was not allowed to go farther than a peculiar sensitiveness at the deed.

The self complex was abnormally prominent in Gwendolen. She was determined to be happy. Gratification of every whim, to the evasion of every responsibility and the ignoring of the social existence, save as a ministry to herself, produced that self-centred activity, resulting in an unhealthy state of superiority. Such was the constant reaction to her environment. Conscious of a cleverness which to her own mind amounted almost to perspicacity, she was resolved to overawe circumstances by the assertion of her will, for she had a sublime confidence in herself. Deronda was too modest, unassuming, hesitating and uncertain of himself to choose an environment for himself. Gwendolen made every sphere in which she moved accord with desire by suppression of antagonizing elements.

Patience and tact rarely ever combine with a supercilious superiority. The idea of instructing her less clever and opinionated sisters suggested too much of boredom which was a feeling her nature must avoid. Never having sought to give pleasure, others' needs did not awaken any sense of opportunity or privilege. Duty and responsibility in a nature where the dependence of social relations is not realized, did not exist. Consequently, her sisters' wants could find no helpful response, since social habits had not been formed. However, that inborn energy of egoistic desire and power of inspiring fear, together with the total fearlessness of making herself disagreeable, marked her limitation. She was incapable of any deep or lasting affection. Her feelings were too selfish for that exotic quality of soul. As a result, she could play with affection in others and make it contribute to her own increasing desires for new and flashing experiences. Rex could be sacrificed on the fireless altar of her emotions without the glimmer of a feeling of remorse for the victim.

Over against her self-confidence, which in its rashness, some folk called "spirit", there was in Gwendolen an instinct she studiously avoided others witnessing. Though she was daring in speech, and reckless in brave dangers, both



physical and moral, she was peculiarly susceptible to terror. The incident of the sliding panel with its "awful face" produced a panic in her feelings. She had no consciousness of spiritual restraints, and religion to her was a subject to be liked or disliked, as arithmetic or accounts; it was no question of emotional alarm. "What she unwittingly recognized, and would have been glad for others to be unaware of, was that liability of hers to fits of spiritual dread, though this fountain of awe had not found its way into connection with the religion taught her or with any human relations." (1) What to others was mere "sensitiveness" or "excitability of nature" was really the primal instinct of fear characteristic of a savage.

Two personalities stronger than her own entered her environment and reshaped it. Deronda's at first had the occult influence of an evil eye, later it became an outer conscience checking caprice, and a suggestion of what she might have been. At Leubronn she had thoughtlessly cast away for a mere necessity the necklace which heredity should have made priceless. Deronda restored it, with all the unconcern of one accustomed to such generous impulses. She haunted his presence, and sought the strength of his words, not as one in love with him, but in pity with herself. He personalized those impulses of which she was only dimly conscious. In his presence, she intuitively became more unselfish, less concerned about the desire to strike with admiration all within her sphere and subdue them to her will. Had Deronda been desirous of exercising more power over her, he doubtless would have failed. It was his very unconcern which attracted her. His presence came nearest to rousing what affection she was capable of, but it found no reciprocal feeling in him, for she symbolized to him the lower order of motives to which he could not respond. The memory of his presence preserved for her through the debacle of her married life, the one ideal of social relation she retained. After the catastrophic experience in the Mediterranean, their lives again intersect, but it is as vitalized outer conscience, to stimu-

(1) Edition, P58.

ate in her inner conscience an almost impossible desire to spend her life in an attempt to restore what the locust and caterpillar had eaten.

The other was Grandcourt, destined to bear a closer relation than Deronda, to whom he was an absolute contrast. The sympathetic nature in its purest and highest energy in Deronda seems to push the "low, dull, reptilian order of Grandcourt farther into the slime and dust" (1). He was an embodiment of flamboyant egoism. Selfish, cynical, and haughty, yet possessing those towers of animal strength which belong to a domineering villain, he sought and found his prey in Gwendolen. Her charm, vivacity and neurotic disposition accentuated by dominant will for the pleasant and entertaining, found its superior in his cold, calculating nature. Nothing is more passionless than his proposal, except his lack of pity for her when once a victim in his toils.

Circumstances aided him, and Gwendolen, though fully cognizant of all those things which should have thwarted response, had to submit, for her layers of habitual selfishness prompted her in the direction of the easier position. With the strangle hold, he gloated in his romanceless villainry. Fortunately, his lack of any semblance to humanity carried him to excess and relieved his tortured wife from the Dantean inferno. The tremors of that nightmare experience remained in the fatal remembrance of the motives that prevented her from making an effort to save him, which revealed the intense individualism of her nature. Grandcourt's brutal serpentine torture had succeeded in suppressing that "will to her own way", but the silence enforced upon her, only held those motives in abeyance. She had submitted to his dictating manner rather than create a scene in which she knew she would have been the loser. But the resolution toward individuality reasserted itself with opportunity. This appeared when Grandcourt was in the water. Then arose that aboriginal instinct for the preservation of identity, to the exclusion

(1) "Studies of English Literature, 1787-1872", Dowden.

of that weak impulse from a slowly awakening conscience. Deronda had unhesitatingly rescued a lone stranger; to Gwendolen the social demand of another's distress, even though her husband, fell before the choice of her own relief to come through that other's fall.

Whatever pathetic attempt she would make at self-sacrifice and renunciation, urged on by the inspiration of Deronda, could be interpreted only in the light of the pangs of awakened conscience to expiate a crime, rather than create a social passion expressed in service. The last picture we have of her in this relation lacks the impetus of spontaneity which comes through a consciousness of a high mission in life. Deronda going forward with inherited traditions with an ardor which makes it religion, even though his purposes did not extend beyond this life, is a complete contrast to that unsocial life of Gwendolen, based on individualism which has no spiritual anchorage in the instincts of the religious life, or in the traditions of her people.

#### Realism in "Daniel Deronda"

Regarding the backgrounds of beauty, though fewer and less extensive, there is practically no divergent criticism. The old memorial abbey, with its grassy court enclosed by a Gothic cloister, its mellow sunshine and blown roses; Cardell Close with its woods from roofed grove to open glade presenting a panorama of constantly changing scenery; the lengthened shadows on the Thames at Richmond, its softening light touching the darker masses of tree and building with an added glow, maintained that deliciously rich description so common in all her works. Even the Mediterranean shores glisten "gem-like with purple shallows, a sea where one may float between blue and blue in an open-eyed dream that the world has done with sorrow". (1) In pure description, this is the most poetic of all. It would appear as if the very strain in delineation of character increases the intensity of her scenic backgrounds, and adds an iridescent beauty to that deep, sad music which came from our

(1) Edition, P.606.

author's soul.

The characters of Gwendolen and Grandcourt are admirably well drawn, according to type, but there is little to relieve the very sordidness of their baseless natures. The results of their self-pleasing careers are followed out with such irreversible depravations, that it is only with a shock from a terrible situation that the one is checked, and the other prevented by death from carrying a villainous purpose to its inhuman fruition. Gwendolen is partially excused by the absence of hereditary associations, but they hardly prevent her from becoming a satire of the social life of the time. Had they been the principal characters, they might with the touches of sympathy given to all such, have been remarkable creations, but as they are, they are realistic only in the extreme sense as centres of forces operating with passionate intensity toward a climax.

Mordecai, the "incarnated pursuit of an ideal"(1), and Mirah "beautiful in singleness and purity of soul"(2), are not interesting as personalities. They give too much the impression they are created for atmosphere, to give effect to the Providential interference of Deronda's seraphic personality. However, Mirah is far more real than Mordecai, and presents that richly tinted life too simple and truthful for the confusion in the surroundings.

It is around Deronda's person that the divergent criticism has been waged. Perhaps the lowest is that of Margaret Lonsdale, to whom Deronda was a "prig" (3), that irritated temper, and turned judgment aside. To Leslie Stephen, he is an "ethereal" (4) expression, and too suprahuman, a "schoolgirl's hero" representing "an untenable theory". He seems to think George Eliot saw her hero "through a romantic haze" which deprived him of reality. Frederick Harrison could not

(1) "George Eliot", Leslie Stephen: P.185.

(2) "Studies in English Literature, 1787-1877", Dowden: P.306.

(3) "George Eliot", Margaret Lonsdale: P.4.

(4) "George Eliot", Leslie Stephen.

treat the book with unvarnished favor. To him "with all its merits and even beauties, *Deronda* has the fatal effect of unpleasant characters who are neither beautiful nor interesting, terrible situations which bore rather than terrify us, a plot which is at once preposterous and wearisome". (1) Saintsbury while recognizing that it contained some of the best work she did, thought the *Deronda* incident "an excellent subject for Comic Opera", while the novel was spoilt by the most astounding "jargon chiefly drawn from the scientific and philosophical phraseology" (2). It was left partly to Dowden to give a true appreciation from the better side of the production; "In '*Daniel Deronda*', for the first time, the poetical side of George Eliot's genius obtains adequate expression, through the medium which is proper to her - that of prose - and in complete association with the non-poetical elements in her nature. It is the ideal creation, happier in conception and tone, which, '*The Spanish Gypsy*' failed to be." (3) To him, realism of the ordinary variety is no more to be expected in the experience of rare souls, than in "*King Lear*". The book is a homage to the emotions, possessing "an impassioned aspect, an air of spiritual prescience, far more than an exactitude of science" (4). Hence, the realism of the book is problematic, depending upon the preconceived ideas of the reader, or the "voice" one expects to hear in its perusal.

(1) "Studies in Early Victorian Literature", Frederick Harrison: P.217.

(2) "Later XIXth Century Literature", Saintsbury: P. 116.

(3) "Studies in Literature, 1797-1877", Dowden: P.275-276.

(4) Ibid, P.297.

### CONCLUSION.

The nineteenth century with its stress on the didactic tendency made it intensely difficult for writers dealing with life problems to avoid providing a cut-and-dried system. Comte, Darwin, Spencer and Huxley all attempted to meet this demand by a systematized structure into which society might fit with as few exceptions as possible. George Eliot, no less than the rest, fell into line, and before the last of her novels was written, her particular estimate of social forces was fairly clearly enunciated. Beginning first with apparently insignificant incidents, she wove them around with strong and at times violent feelings; then extending their influence, revealed their origin, their motive power, and effect upon the social content. She was never satisfied to deal with a current of events and play upon a pseudo-emotional interest. True, she did once or twice indulge in melodrama, e.g., the execution scene in "Adam Bede", and the Featherstone Will scene in "Middlemarch"; but they are mere episodes compared to the emphasis she placed upon action always having a moral worth, and the result of impulses arising from strengthened motives within the real nature. The relations in which she placed the individual and society showed the increasing emphasis upon heredity, environment and tradition. Her characters always act in accordance with the tendency suggested with inherited powers. Thus Hetty and Gwendolen are accounted for, through the lack of anchorage within inherited forces, while the idealistic activity of Dinah, Maggie and Dorothea is pictured as the outcome of the trend given to their natures by heredity and nourished by tradition. This is what helps to produce that cohesiveness of character for which our author became famous. It placed



her also beyond the ethical realist, into the sphere of the psychological realism. As such she is heartily in accord with the efforts of social psychology, dealt with by Baldwin. In writing of tradition, he says, "In human groups this (tradition) is enormously developed in what we call 'culture', a body of beliefs, usages, and sanctions transmitted entirely by social means, and administered by growing individuals by example, precept and discipline. This constitutes the social store, the collective wealth of the group, its moral heritage". (1) Later on he states that the specific task of social psychology "is that of tracing out the internal development of the individual mind, its progressive endowment with individuality, under the constant stimulation of its entourage, and with nourishment drawn from it" (2). Fuse this with realistic imagination, and we have George Eliot's novels dealing with the "inner struggle of a soul" (3), revealing "motives, impulses and hereditary influences which govern human action".

The intense human sympathies in which the relation of the individual and society are expressed, help the realism of her books. They are not limited to the chief characters, but found also among the ordinary human beings that help to prevent her style from becoming artificial and stiff. Of these, Scherer says, "Happily she has divided herself in her novels, keeping clearness in her narrative and naturalness in her dialogue, and reserving loaded phrase and abstract terminology for her reflections" (4). This, of course, must refer more especially to her earlier works, for there the speculative is not allowed to obtrude the realistic imagination. Some of her works critically strain the realism, through the overloading of psychical analysis and improbable reactions, but in these the realism is found in the cohesiveness, more than in charms of idyllic content, or the portrayal of people such as we expect to meet

(1) "History of Psychology", Baldwin: P.106,107.

(2) Ibid, P.108.

(3) "History of English Literature", Long.

(4) "Essays on English Literature", Scherer: P.



every day. In this sense George Eliot may be criticized rather severely, for she does at times carry her individuals so far beyond the ordinary society in which they originated, that it is only with distinct sense of stress we follow with consistency the somewhat ethereal creations. These but show the deeper, stronger hold she had on the springs of faith and action, than any of the "drawing<sup>room</sup> type of novelists" (1). Her type of genius with its own sphere was overpowering enough to cause Hutton in 1876 to estimate that "for masculine composure and range of sympathy, for strength of grasp in dealing with universal human feelings, for skill in habitually realizing to us that individual differences of character are engrafted on a fundamental community of nature, - she has no rival among the literary artists of the present day" (2).

(1) and (2) "Essays on Literary Criticism", Hutton.

GEORGE ELIOT'S NOVELS.

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