

Of the power and depth of meaning in social relations also, George Eliot never allows us to lose sight. She teaches honesty and veracity in all things, laying particular stress upon what she calls "the simplest law that lies at the foundation of trust, which binds man to man—faithfulness to the spoken word." With remarkable force she sets forth the duty of regarding the good of others. In the history of Gwendolen Harleth, and the sad experience of Maggie Tulliver, she portrays the sin and consequent misery of making one's gain out of another's loss. Polonius said to Læertes, "This, above all, to thine own self be true." George Eliot, speaking from a larger, nobler heart, says to each of us, "Not to self alone, but to thy neighbor, be thou true."

In carrying out this idea, she emphasizes the power of "the blessed influence of one true, loving, human soul upon another," teaching the brotherhood of man and the duty of helping one another. This doctrine she exemplifies in the lives of Mr. Tryan, Daniel Deronda and Savonarola. Each one of these brings new life to some weak one, through the force of his own strong nature; Mr. Tryan, showing the way of deliverance to poor, sin-burdened Janet Dempster; Deronda, responding to the piteous appeals of Gwendolen, for some power strong enough to lift her beyond herself; the Florentine reformer, coming with his burning messages of consolation and direction to Romola, in the emptiness and despair of her disappointed wifehood. In all she exhibits distinctly and forcibly the duty of the strong towards the weak, and the ties that bind together all human souls in a close, indissoluble relation.

Prominent in all George Eliot's writings is her recognition of the supreme nature of the inner life, the terrible reality and earnestness of existence. And so, at the foundation of all she has written, is the soul's need of that which shall prove to be the highest good—the satisfying portion. In no one of the noble characters she has given us do we find a mind content with what is petty and superficial. Everywhere is recognized the heart's craving for the best, the highest, and in the striving of one and another for the attainment of this good that satisfies, centres the interest of this author's novels. To each the struggle comes in a different form; in all the aspiration is the same.