

literature, accompanied on the ascending scale by the development of the rarest nobility of character in his deserted and disappointed wife, through wrongs and sufferings which are equally typical and representative. In "Middlemarch," though there is perhaps no single figure so striking as these two, the canvass is broader, and the author's observation of common life is at its ripest and best, as she gives us picture after picture of every day people with their errors and weaknesses, which are shown in a way that everyone must recognise as true, to be of the same growth with their bitter fruits, and honest homely virtues connected by practical logic equally inexorable with contentment and success. Among the lessons with which this "study" is crowded, I may cite as pre-eminently useful the example of Rosamond Vincy, as showing how common-place selfishness and self-complacency may destroy the usefulness, and blight the career of those with whom we are most closely linked, in a world where loving care and wholesome influence are the powers that conserve gifts and graces and save the family and the community.

My space will not allow me to go into minute criticism of even the most prominent and memorable characters in George Eliot's novels, the object of the foregoing citations simply being to call up to the readers of those immortal works passages and scenes whose associations have interfused themselves with their whole intellectual being, as well as to suggest to those who have not seriously taken up the study, somewhat of the riches that lie ready to their hand, not merely in the wonderful variety and interest of the characters portrayed, but in the wealth of observations, wise, just, and tender, with which all her writings abound, thoughts which have become to multitudes a *κρήνη εὖς ἀεί* and "a joy forever." The point towards which these remarks should converge is the practical question indicated at the beginning: What attitude is to be assumed by Christian men towards George Eliot's works? The question is important, for if the previous estimate is a correct one it is plain that these writings may be made a valuable instrument of moral training. But the matter becomes complicated with facts as to the personal history and religious beliefs of the author, and so a decision is often not arrived at, or a false or at least an unsatisfactory answer is sometimes rendered. Two extreme answers may be and have practically