

hands, but the other phases of Italian life are described with great accuracy. *Midlemarch*, though from a literary point of view, one of her best works, lacks the clear moral perspective of her earlier productions.

Daniel Deronda, on the other hand, her last and from a moral point of view, one of her greatest creations, is perhaps the best embodiment of her noble aspirations after lofty human ideals, though it must be admitted that the story is almost too ethereal, considering the weakness and utter inability of men to do anything good or noble by themselves.

What is especially noticeable in her characters is her tender regard for her own sex and the sweetness and nobility with which she adorns the heroines of her tales. In one of her works, she says: "I think it must somewhere be written that the virtues of mothers be visited on the children, as well as the sins of fathers." This is a characteristic saying; for it is in painting persons of her own sex she is most happy. The women of the majority of novelists, and particularly of Dickens, except Agnes in *David Copperfield* and perhaps Florence in *Dombey and Son*, are vague, weak,

selfish, and in many instances, low characters. But Maggie Tulliver, *Romola* and *Dinah* are heroines that do honour to womankind; they are pure, magnanimous and unselfish.

On the whole, it must be confessed that George Eliot, despite her irreligious tendencies, was a woman of noble aspirations. With a mind anchored firmly in the truths of revelation, she would have been one of the greatest intellectual personages of our times. Her imagination would have acquired that elasticity and assurance, the absence of which is its only artistic defect. Her noble ethical conceptions would have gained certainty and grandeur and her poetic feelings would not have been weighed down by that mass of sceptical thought, with which they struggled for mastery in vain. Few minds at once so speculative and so creative have put their mark on literature. Had her earnestness of purpose and her ardent love for mankind been joined with a faith in man's nobler destiny the possibilities of her influence for good with her time and generation would have been incalculable.

JOHN P. DONOVAN, '89.

THE COUNTRY SCHOOL HOUSE.

There it stands, the country school house,

As it stood in bygone days;

Still a source of admiration,

And the theme of rural lays.

Could the stranger's eye mistake it,

As he wanders down the road,

And not recognize the building

There, as Learning's rude abode?

There's no structure half so homely

In the country to be seen,

As is this, with blindless windows

And a gaping door between.

Every cottage by the wayside

Boasts a fence or ruined wall;

This alone has no enclosure,

Being the free domain of all.

Like the fathers of the hamlet,

On whom age begins to tell.

This most humble shrine of learning

Feels the hand of Time as well.

Of the former's ripe condition,

Snowy-white locks render proof;

While the latter's age is noted

By its moss-o'er covered roof.

Still erect its walls are standing,

And its timber still is sound,

Save a few rain-rotted shingles

Which lie scattered on the ground.

How familiar looks the play-ground!

But the grass is almost gone,

Like the merry band of scholars

That have vanished one by one.

And its entry is unaltered!

Where still stands the stairs that led

To the prison of dread phantoms,

To the garret overhead.

As of old, the winter's firewood

Finds a place behind the stairs;

Still upon the pile are scattered

Legs and backs of broken chairs.

Ah! how well do I remember

How the urchin, sent for wood,

Used to slyly watch the garret,

Whence, 'twas said, came nothing good.

For a story then was current

That a master, years before,

In that dark, unwholesome chamber,

Chained a scholar to the floor.