

small world in which she is placed. The book is an impressive one, and calculated to strike a responsive chord in the hearts of imaginative readers. In the analysis of scenes and characters much originality is displayed, and the existence of a superior intellect is revealed. Besides *Jane Eyre* Brontë has written *Shirley* and *Villette*. In the former she has drawn a kindly picture of her sister Emily, herself an artist of no mean distinction. The character is strongly portrayed and executed with intense tenderness. In thoroughness and force Brontë is perhaps not inferior to George Eliot. But the authoress of *Jane Eyre* is not capable of the same largeness of view and understanding of the inspiring motives of human actors.

In the works of Brontë there is shown lack of experience and proportion and at times morbid fatality seems to cast its shadow over the perspective. They are books that may always be read with pleasure and interest. They are destined to retain their popularity on account of their intrinsic worth against the test of time and efforts of the hosts of novelists who every year make their appeal for public favor.

Jane Austen was probably the earliest writer to furnish in England the so-called domestic novel. And though she wrote when the century was young it is questionable if, within her own limits, she has since been equalled. The value of this praise can only be realized when we contemplate the number who have been her imitators. Jane Austen was endowed by nature with the faculty for story-telling. For it is related of her that with children she was an especial favorite, delighting them with her improvised tales. Her father afforded her every means of improving her natural gifts by way of reading and instruction. In fact her education which embraced a knowledge of French and Italian, was superior to that of the ordinary girl of that period. Thus well provided with the all required for a literary career, she did not fail to reach distinction. *Sense and Sensi-*

*bility* appeared in 1811, *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813, and *Mansfield Park* was published a year later. The works were favorably received, although their authorship was not divulged till some years afterwards. The stories deal principally with the gentry of England. Their merit lay in that hard-to-be-acquired but delightful quality—simplicity. They showed the author to be intelligently acquainted with the conditions which characterized English home life. The pictures drawn were felicitous and above all true to nature. In the introduction of suitable personages a happy selection obtained. There could be no doubt that a new light had risen in the literary firmament, one destined to shed rays of hope and comfort for years to come. History, since, has proved the correctness of this view.

In Jane Austen there were no morbid feelings of unrest or dissatisfaction at existing conditions, nothing to draw her apart from the rest of mankind. Her's was a buoyant nature, and the sentiments expressed in her several novels were the simple outbursts of a cheerful heart. The stories themselves may belong to a past age, but not so with the characters. They represent human nature so well that they might belong to any period. Jane Austen, though not as passionate as Brontë, nor as philosophic as Eliot, possesses in an eminent degree those qualities which appeal strongly to the average reader,—simplicity and cheerfulness. Her touch is delicate and refined. If there is no decided analysis of human nature to its roots the result is perhaps not rendered less attractive. Its striking features are well brought out, its strength faithfully represented, while its weaknesses and follies are playfully satirized.

If we wish to experience real and wholesome enjoyment from reading, when cares press heavy upon us, we may turn to the pages of Miss Austen's novels with a reasonable hope of seeing things assume a brighter hue.

LOUIS J. KEHOE, '94.