

any uneasiness from a man of broken fortune." Mr. Cross, in his book on the development of the English novel, calls them "the nearest approach to real country girls that had yet appeared in the novel." He might, perhaps, have gone further, and said, "the nearest approach to real *girls*."

The novels of Miss Edgeworth were too openly didactic in tone to give us any very life-like type of heroine. However, in holding up to ridicule the various follies and affectations of the young woman of her day, she probably strengthened the tendency toward naturalness in the heroine. "Angelina," for instance, is the story of a girl who, after a long interchange of letters "stuffed with sentimental nonsense" with an unknown friend, Araminta, goes in search of this affinity, only to be disillusioned and to return to the "friendly and judicious care" of her former protectress, with whom she acquires "that which is more useful to the possessor than genius—good sense." The story closes with the cheering reflection that "It is possible for a young lady . . . to cure herself of the affectation of Sensibility and the folly of Romance." Miss Austen, too, directs her gentle satire against this over-sentimentality. Marianne, in "Sense and Sensibility," effects so complete a recovery from an early passion for the Romantic as to marry a man who was twenty years her senior, and who "still sought the constitutional safeguard of a flannel waistcoat." In the same way, in "Pride and Prejudice," she has her quiet laugh at the sententious heroine, in the person of Mary Bennet, who has her stock of moral reflections ready for application in every event of life—a type of heroine of whom the epigrammatic damsel who flashes her way through the pages of so many modern novels must be a close connection.

Our debt to Miss Austen is for something more, however than a few sermons against such characters as these. In "Pride and Prejudice" she not only reached the highest point of artistic workmanship, but in Elizabeth Bennet she has given us what is possibly her greatest achievement in character. In a letter to her sister Jane Austen has voiced the estimate that most of her readers will form of Elizabeth. "I must confess that I think her as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print, and how I shall be able to tolerate those who do not like *her*, at least, I do not know." The story, very baldly, is this: Elizabeth Bennet meets Mr. Darcy at a ball, and becomes deeply preju-