

intellect, combined with a bright, realistic imagination. George Eliot was of a poetic temperament; the poems she has written, such as 'The Spanish Gypsy,' 'How Lisa Loved the King' and the 'Legend of Jubal,' are exquisite in feeling and conception; still, in point of form, they lack the power and ease of her prose works. But, though her fine metrical compositions may not entitle her to a high rank as a poet, the poetic side of her mind was deep enough and true enough to lend richness and harmony to her romances.

In comparing George Eliot with other novelists, her powers are seen to the best advantage. Miss Austen and Anthony Trollope are what may be styled society novelists; they describe society in general, and when they develop characters they paint them by indirect touches and by a series of incidents, not by one or two bold strokes of the brush, as does Charlotte Brontë. Charlotte Brontë, however, is a powerful delineator of individual, though sometimes rather exceptional characters which she depicts on a very indistinct background of general social life. George Eliot embodies in her writings the best characteristics of both schools. There is in her novels the same easy delineation; less surface painting, but more depth of characters; less mannerism and more human life. There is none of Charlotte Brontë's *clair obscur*, but her colours are more evenly distributed over the whole surface of her pictures.

Justin McCarthy, in his review of the Victorian literature, says: Charlotte Brontë was genius and ignorance; George Eliot was genius and culture. George Eliot had an eye keen at observing external things, and her characters are not the mere creations of her fancy, but the result of close study of actual human nature.

Her English manners are those of the rural class. The personages she describes have not that educated reticence which culture imparts; they give open expression to what they feel. It was amongst such as these that George Eliot acquired her knowledge of human life, and it is this peculiar characteristic that gives George Eliot's novels such a pleasing freshness of

colouring. For this reason amongst others, we like to read her novels; the clatter and smoke of Rome, as in the days of Horace, grow wearisome, and we long to retire to the more subdued beauties of the country.

What we care chiefly to know about human characters is not so much their special tastes and humours, as the general depth and mass of human nature that is in them. It is in the power of delineating this that George Eliot surpasses all other novelists. In intensity and force she is not superior to Charlotte Brontë, but in breadth of range, in the painting of massive strength and the repose of strong natures, she stands unrivalled by any of the other novel writers. In Adam Bede and Romola, George Eliot shows broader religious views than any others of her craft; although scouting the idea of revealed truths, she sees far more clearly than Miss Austen, Miss Brontë, Anthony Trollope, or even Mr. Thackeray, the actual space occupied by religious motives in the life of man and the depth and beauty and significance of these in her characters.

A true vein of humour runs through all the works of George Eliot, but it is not of the satirical kind as Thackeray's. Thackeray, by the scalpel of his satire, probes human nature to the quick and seems to find nothing but what is weak and corrupt. George Eliot, on the contrary, depicts the healthier phases of human life, even more powerfully than the unsound ones. She does not expose, but paints human nature, its strength as well as its weakness.

When Adam Bede was published, George Eliot took the hearts of the English people by storm. There was in it a freshness which most found wanting in her later works. It is purely a picture of country life, and has many noble personages. Silas Marner is marked by broad humour. Romola is a historical novel; the hero is Savonarola, who is styled by her the Italian Luther. Savonarola's antagonism to the Church, as might be expected from her anti-religious bias, is a pleasing trait in her eyes. The Church does not receive fair treatment at her