

ample ground for fear on this score. In her youth, being an admirer and devotee of the false German philosophical system as represented by Feuerbach, and later favoring the evolutionary theory of Spencer, it is little wonder that, unaided by the light of revelation, her mind was led into the channels of untrue morality. Still it were difficult to deny her the praise, at least, of being actuated by a high moral purpose. Candor seems to be present, and the false views held were perhaps rather the result of untoward circumstances than of any personal desire to wander from the true and safe path. Any person deserves credit for acting up to his convictions. If possessed of no settled religious views herself, the author of *Romola* was not prevented by prejudice from treating respectfully of religious topics in the lives of her characters, and according to these a conscientious and deep-rooted desire to search after and attain the truth. She realizes the important place which religion occupies in the lives of men and the benignity of its influence. Hence some of her finest characters especially in *Romola* and *Adam Bede* are persons strongly imbued with religious sentiments. Throughout her works the qualities of the artist are combined with those of the thinker, the philosopher. The light flows equally over her picture whilst her poetic inclination gave a charm and glow to her prose novels which those of others probably do not possess. And all are marked by subtle touches peculiarly her own.

As to whether the novels of this gifted artist should be placed in the hands of the general reader wise minds would probably advise "No." For the false doctrines contained therein are clothed in such enticing garb that they are like to insinuate themselves into the favor of the thoughtless reader and produce a deleterious effect upon the untrained mind. But for him who is firmly grounded in his religious convictions and who is enabled by the light of experience and philosophical training to distinguish the true from the false and the real from the fantastic, George Eliot provides a large fund for highly moral reflection, and regales him with an intellectual treat which scarcely another English writer of fiction to the same degree affords.

Coming to consider the qualities and beauties to be found in the novels of Charlotte Brontë we find ourselves on a different, a lower plane. Yet, withal, we are conscious that the works could not have come from the hands of an ordinary story-teller. They bear the imprint of one who is an enthusiast in the work undertaken and who is seriously alive to the importance of the task. Charlotte Brontë was the daughter of a country clergyman, of Yorkshire. Consequently being removed from the busy haunts of men she was afforded slight opportunity of gaining knowledge and experience of human nature as exhibited in its various phases in the actual life of real persons. From this however it is by no means to be inferred that her works do not offer examples of close character study. Books are a prolific source of information, and when studied with the aid of a vivid imagination and a quick intelligence, much may be gleaned from their pages to supply for a lack of experience. Brontë must have understood this, for otherwise how could we account for the composition, on the part of a country maiden, of works noted for their charm and vigor. She is primarily a subjective writer as her characters are largely the creatures of her own mind. Her life was not altogether a path of roses, as she found difficulties to contend with and obstacles to overcome. Persons of sensitive and passionate natures are more keen in the perception of affronts. And Brontë is said to have been highly passionate. Indeed her works point to this. They are apt to convey the idea that she labored under feelings of repression and injustice from early years. Hence sentiments of pessimism and even despair find their way into her novels. A tone of bitterness seems to run through all. All of which goes to prove how great is the influence exerted by early impressions.

*Jane Eyre* is probably to be regarded as her greatest work. By some it is recognized as one of the mile-stones in English literature. In it are given vent to those feelings of bitterness of spirit and those strange notions of life which were the outbursts of her intense nature. The chief interest in it centres around the figure of a little governess, and the strifes which she is forced to encounter in contact with the