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to reviewers in general, that if any principle at all is 'proved' by any of my Hill-top Novels, it will be simply this: 'Act as I think right, for the highest good of human kind, and you will infallibly and inevitably come to a bad end for it.'

Not to prove anything, but to suggest ideas, to arouse emotions, is, I take it, the true function of fiction. One wishes to make one's readers *think* about problems they have never considered, *feel* with sentiments they have disliked or hated. The novelist as prophet has his duty defined for him in those divine words of Shelley's:

'Singing songs unbidden
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not.'

That, too, is the reason that impels me to embody such views as these in romantic fiction, not in deliberate treatises. 'Why sow your ideas broadcast,' many honest critics say, 'in novels where mere boys and girls can read them? Why not formulate them in serious and argumentative books,