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granted that the book represents my own original thinking, whether good or bad, on some important point in human society or human evolution.

Not, again, that any one of these novels will deliberately attempt to *prove* anything. I have been amused at the allegations brought by certain critics against *The Woman who Did* that it 'failed to prove' the practicability of unions such as Herminia's and Alan's. The famous Scotsman, in the same spirit, objected to *Paradise Lost* that it 'proved naething': but his criticism has not been generally endorsed as valid. To say the truth, it is absurd to suppose a work of imagination can prove or disprove anything. The author holds the strings of all his puppets, and can pull them as he likes, for good or evil: he can make his experiments turn out well or ill: he can contrive that his unions should end happily or miserably: how, then, can his story be said to *prove* anything? A novel is not a proposition in Euclid. I give due notice beforehand