

ever met with Mrs. Poyser. They also hint that George Eliot's style is not quite so transparently clear as it used to be. It would be quite useless to ask them whether it is reasonable to expect to be able to pick up the meaning of a sentence embodying the result of some deep mental analysis as instantaneously as the meaning of one that pictures a midland village green or a pretty girl admiring her trinkets and ribbons in the glass. Neither would they understand it, if we told them that even George Eliot seldom meets more than one Mrs. Poyser in a lifetime, and that a George Eliot would not stoop to imitate even herself in the creation of a new character. The complaint which these writers in effect make is, that our author's philosophy has got the upper hand in her tales, to the detriment of the general effect. They would fain still have the thrilling interest of the 'Mill on the Floss,' or the idyllic sweetness of 'Silas Marner.' As well might they bid the blossom forbear from setting into fruit in due season.

Undoubtedly the tendency which was first noticeably perceptible in 'Daniel Deronda' has, in the present work, declared itself very markedly, and there is no attempt in 'Theophrastus' to present us with even a thread of the tale to join the thoughts together.

After the first few chapters in which Theophrastus depicts his own essential being, we come to a series of short sketches, each chapter rounding off completely in itself some character or phase of modern society. Though it is Theophrastus who beholds and who speaks, yet he does not distort or colour the objects he presents to us in the long gallery of his acquaintance sufficiently to keep us aware of his personality, or to add perceptibly to our means of estimating his qualities. George Eliot perceives this so clearly that in the last chapter, 'The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!' there is no attempt to remind us of the imaginary speaker, and Theophrastus fades away from our vision without a word of farewell.

We do not think that in writing these "Impressions" George Eliot has in any way shown an intention to abandon the field in which her fame has been chiefly won. The material she has used would not have been readily made available for a novel, it was evidently burning in her mind and had to find utterance, but

in all probability it will remain her only prose work not cast in the regular mould of fiction, even as 'The Spanish Gypsy' will remain her only long poem. In understanding the range of her genius to its full extent, after ages would not feel inclined to part with either of these works, although a new novel from her pen were offered in substitution for each of them.

In these papers walk the men of today, differing in the fashion of their life and thought as clearly and distinctly from the men of twenty-five, or even of ten years ago as their wives differ in the fashion of their dresses in a like period. Do you want to know the byways of scientific controversy as conducted in this year of grace!—the history of poor Merman in the chapter 'How We Encourage Research' will enlighten you. Here walks Spike, the 'political molecule,' whose radicalism goes to the root of nothing and whose liberalism is a pure outcome of narrow selfishness.

If you wish to see how a man may start with high aims in life, and gradually hoodwinking himself, may allow circumstances to turn him into an utterly different being from the ideal he set before himself,—read the story of Mixtus the 'involuntary renegade.' Here, too, walks the lady authoress, big with the fame of one book and an appendix, and apt to persecute her friends with an album containing the usual newspaper puffs.

And among all these varied characters, probing their weaknesses, exposing their motives more clearly than they dare confess to themselves in the secrecy of their closets, walks Theophrastus. He or she, for, in narrating, Theophrastus and George Eliot are one, feels a kindred failing with many of these poor weak men.

In the midst of the sarcasm, of the stinging lash of reproof, and of the blinding flash of truth let in upon cankered places and crannies of the soul, we hear this just Inquisitor examine herself, trace out the kindred fault in her own breast, expose it in its true colours, accept her share of ridicule or blame, in the same loving spirit that Thackeray was wont to display when, after exposing the vices and follies of mankind, he would go apart with his 'mea culpa,' and write himself down also as a snob and worthy of the pillory as such.

We have left ourselves no room for