

Little Maggie Tulliver, with her sensitive soul so keenly alive to all beauty and harmony, dreaming in her poor, narrow home, and longing for a taste of the wondrous life in the great outer world: Dorothea Brooke, in Tipton Manor, pondering grand schemes of philanthropy and benevolence; Dinah Morris, preaching her simple Gospel to the rude men of Snowfield; Romola, the Florentine maiden, toiling with her blind old father over the volumes of ancient poetry and learning; even poor Gwendolen, with all her selfish ignorance and narrowness; all are yearning with something of the same eagerness for the hidden, higher life of which they vaguely feel the existence. We are moved with sympathy for each one as she reaches out after the great secret of human life. Our hearts beat with tenderness for poor, misguided Maggie, searching in books for truth, seeking peace in renunciation, struggling against self and love, and faltering in her weakness, yet holding on in her effort to grasp the good that still must be. We follow with pitiful interest the disappointed, incomplete life of Dorothea, who sees her ideals vanish, and becomes conscious of her girlhood's delusions, yet never quite loses her faith and aspiration. We bow our heads in loving reverence before Romola, who, failing of the bliss of which she had dreamed, when the joy had gone out of her own life, gathers up her energy and finds her greatest blessing in the work of strengthening the weak about her. None ever more clearly realized or taught with greater force than George Eliot has done this universal demand for something beyond a merely human existence. The development of good or evil in character she depicts with dramatic vigor, and through her works runs the doctrine of retribution, casting a sombre shadow upon even what is great and good. Nowhere is the danger of self-indulgence and wrong choice more clearly taught than in her novels. The terrible career of Tito Milema, and the unhappy life of Gwendolen Harleth, two radiant, highly endowed beings, are a stronger warning and admonition than any abstract appeal could ever be. With the boldness of firm conviction, George Eliot teaches the inevitable consequence of violated law, the relentless force that unites cause and effect, bringing ruthless punishment for all sin. One shudders at the grim power that, holding Tito in its unyielding grasp, hurries him down to the