

tones were present. There was no need of any orchestra." He also liked to go and hear Mr. Ralston, the charming and scholarly story-teller, recite and interpret his fairy lore. These enjoyments were very rare, however, as, indeed, they were poor beside the scenery of history, the heroic figures of great men, and the world drama, on which the eye of Carlyle never closed. The dramatic and other arts came within his reach too late in life. He had passed the age when he could enjoy them for beauty or turn them to use; and when the farther age came, and the feebleness which the arts might have beguiled, he had no pleasure in them.

Carlyle's was not only an essentially religious mind, but even passionately so. His profound reverence, his ever-burning flame of devout thought, made him impatient of all such substitutes for these as dogmas and ceremonies—the lamps gone out long ago. There was a sort of divine anger that filled him whenever forced to contemplate selfishness and egotism in the guise of humility and faith.

#### GEORGE ELIOT.

WHENEVER the life of George Eliot is written, it is plain that the interest will be found to lie chiefly in the records of her mind, as shown by what of her conversation can be preserved and by her correspondence. For of outward events her life had few. She shunned rather than courted publicity, and there will be nothing to satisfy any of those who look for exciting narratives in biography. The time, however, is not come for such a record. Her loss is obviously too recent to her own family and friends to enable them to sift and winnow with impartiality what may be at their disposal. We must be content to wait, and in the mean time merely gather up whatever may be known of one who has long been so much to so many on both sides of the Atlantic. Few of the notices which have yet appeared have been complete, and some have been incorrect. We will here attempt to relate, as far as may be, what there is to tell of her life, and try to give those who had not the great honor of her personal acquaintance some portrait of what she was.

No doubt it is difficult to judge those who live in our own immediate time. The greatest are sometimes hardly appreciated, the insignificant are given too high a

position, by those among whom they live. The sure verdict of the years can alone decide whether she whom we mourn was as great as we deem her. Great she surely was, with no ordinary greatness, who has so swayed the thoughts and moved the heart of her own generation.

Mary Ann Evans—not Marian, though this name was afterward given her by the affection of friends, and was that by which she frequently signed herself—Mary Ann Evans was born at Griff House, near Nuneaton, on the 22d November, 1820. Her father, Mr. Robert Evans, who had begun life as a master-carpenter, came from Derbyshire, and had become land agent to several important properties in that rich Warwickshire district. The sketches of Mr. Burge in *Adam Bede* and of Caleb Garth in *Middlemarch* would give a fair idea of her father's life in these two positions, although it must not be for a moment supposed that either of them was intended as a definite portrait. Her mother died when she was fifteen, and her father afterward removed to Foleshill, near Coventry, with which removal her childish life closed. It is not unlikely that the time will come when, with one or other of her books in their hand, people will wander among the scenes of George Eliot's early youth, and trace each allusion, as they are wont to do at Abbotsford or Newstead, and they will recognize the photographic minuteness and accuracy with which these scenes, so long unvisited, had stamped themselves on the mind of the observant girl.

*Maggie Tulliver's Childhood* is clearly full of the most accurate personal recollections, not, indeed, of scenery, for St. Oggs is the town of Gainsborough, in Lincolnshire, from which the physical features of the tale were taken. But her inner life as a child is described in it and in the autobiographical sonnets called "Brother and Sister." The "Red Deeps," however, the scene of Maggie's spiritual awakening, were near her own home, and had evidently been a favorite haunt of the real Maggie in childhood. So, too, the churches and villages, and the town described in the *Scenes of Clerical Life*, are all drawn from her own intimate experiences. "Cheveril Manor" is Arbury Hall, the seat of the Newdegates, Mr. Robert Evans's early patrons; Knebley, described in *Mr. Gilfil's Love Story*, is Astley Church, hard by; Shepperton, in





GEORGE ELIOT.

*Amos Barton*, is Chilvers Coton; Nun-eaton is Milby; and, indeed, it seems pretty certain, as first pointed out by a writer in the *Graphic*, that many of the incidents, as well as the scenery, of George Eliot's early stories were hung on facts well known in that Warwickshire neighborhood. At the same time it was but little that she took from outside. The merest hint or sketch of one whom she had seen was worked up, by a creative genius scarcely matched since Shakspeare, into a picture which lives, a true memorial. It would be unfair to some of her

characters, far too complimentary to others, to believe that they were actual. In the few instances in which identification is possible, the unlikenesses to that which served as the hint are greater than the likenesses.

Among the most interesting facts of Mary Ann Evans's early life is the deep love she clearly bore her mother. When she speaks of her in the autobiographical sonnets, however slightly, it is with the tenderest touch; and we can not but feel sure that the beautiful maternity of Mrs. Moss, the upright rectitude of Mrs.





GRIFF HOUSE, GEORGE ELIOT'S EARLY HOME.

Garth, the tender spots in the heart of Mrs. Poyser, the mature beauty of Milly Barton, are all recollections of the mother she loved and lost. We do not at all know what was Mrs. Evans's age at her death, but we feel intimately persuaded that she was about thirty-five, the age at which Milly Barton died, and at which the still more beautiful and stately Janet repented, and became a noble woman.

Mr. Robert Evans was able to give his daughter an exceptionally good education. There were and are so many bad schools for girls that it was a piece of singular good fortune that Mrs. Wallington, at Nuneaton, and afterward Miss Franklin, at Coventry, undertook her education. To Mrs. Wallington the writer in the *Graphic* thinks that George Eliot owed some of the beauty of her intonation in reading English poetry. Besides the studies at school, she was fortunate in finding a willing instructor in the then head-master of Coventry Grammar School, Mr. Sheepshanks; and motherless as she was, she possibly studied more deeply than a mother's care for a delicate daughter's health would have permitted. However this may be, the years that she spent near Coventry, on her father's removal to Foleshill, till his death in 1849, were years of excessive work, issuing in a riper culture than that attained by any other prominent Englishwoman of our age, and only approached by that of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

No one can read George Eliot's books without realizing the fact that she had gone through deep religious troubles. Some changes in her faith are recorded in the letter to Miss Hennell. We can not but regret the publication of that letter as it stood, because it is quite clear that words addressed to her friend, and never intended for publication, needed some qualification; but, on the whole, they of course represent the facts. From one belief she passed through doubt to another, though very different, phase of belief, and while she was in this transition stage grave misunderstandings occurred with her own family. The friends who then stood by her and smoothed over the family difficulties, Mr. and Mrs. Bray, of Coventry, brought about incidentally her first introduction to serious literary work. Mrs. Bray's brother, Mr. Charles Hennell, was interested in a translation of Strauss's *Leben Jesu*, which had been intrusted to the lady he was about to marry, and who had before her marriage accomplished about one-fourth of the entire work. During a visit to Tenby with the Brays, Miss Evans became acquainted with this lady, and, on her relinquishment of the task in consequence of her marriage, took it up and completed it. This kind of literary work was then, as unfortunately now, sadly underpaid. Twenty pounds was the entire sum received for this, one of the best translations known to us.

On Mr. Evans's death, in 1849, his daugh-



ter went abroad with the Brays, and staid behind them at Geneva for purposes of study. Some time after her return to England, she became a boarder in the house of Mr.—now Dr.—Chapman, who with his wife was in the habit of receiv-

Miss Evans's literary work in London brought about an acquaintance and a warm friendship with some of the more remarkable literary men of that time. Among others may be mentioned Mr. Herbert Spencer, her close friend for so many



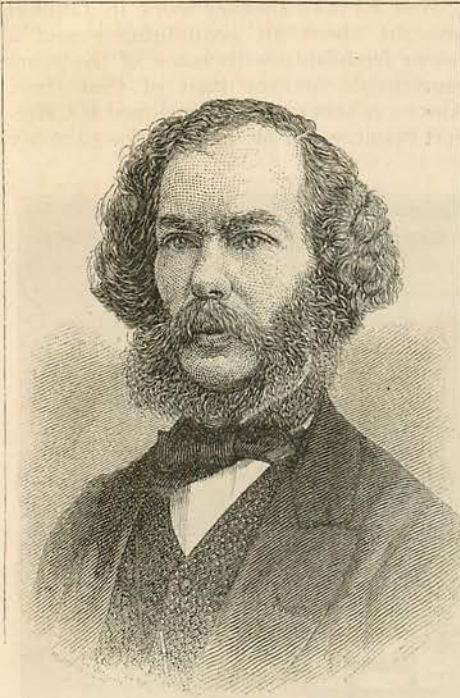
SCHOOL-ROOM AT NUNEATON.

ing ladies into their family. She assisted Mr. Chapman in the editorship of the *Westminster Review*, and her literary career in London was fairly begun. Her work on the *Westminster Review* was chiefly editorial. During the years in which she was connected with it she wrote far fewer articles than might have been supposed. The most important of them were the following, written between 1852 and 1859, inclusive: "Woman in France—Madame De Sable;" "Evangelical Teaching" (on Dr. Cumming); "The Natural History of German Life;" "German Wit" (on Heine); "Worldliness and Other-worldliness" (on Young and Cowper).

Two or three others have been attributed to her, but their authorship is not quite certain, and they are not, at any rate, works by which she would probably desire to be known, or which immediately and clearly prove themselves to be hers by internal evidence.

years; Mr. Pigott, then editor of the *Leader* newspaper, to the pages of which she occasionally contributed; and George Henry Lewes, whose name will always be indissolubly associated with her own, and which she bore for nearly the whole remainder of her life. The question has naturally some interest how far two persons of such remarkable intellectual individuality affected each other's work during the many years of their joint lives. Those who have read George Eliot's novels but superficially, and who have been acquainted with the fact that Mr. Lewes's studies lay very greatly in the direction of physiology, have thought that they discovered his influence in the many scientific similes and allusions which abound in her works; but they are wholly mistaken. In the very earliest writings, as well as in the latest, are passages of this character; and it was only because people noticed them more, as the circumstances of





GEORGE HENRY LEWES.

her life became known, that any special importance has been attributed to them. That each largely influenced the other is true, but the influence was the subtle effect of companionship and association, and certainly there was but very little of direct stimulation, or even direct criticism.

Mr. Lewes's character attained a stability and pose in which it had been somewhat lacking, and the quiet of an orderly and beautiful home enabled him to concentrate himself more and more on works demanding sustained intellectual effort, while Mrs. Lewes's intensely feminine nature found the strong man on whom to lean in the daily business of life, for which she was physically and intellectually unfitted. Her own somewhat sombre cast of thought was cheered, enlivened, and diversified by the vivacity and versatility which characterized Mr. Lewes, and made him seem less like an Englishman than a very agreeable foreigner. Was the character of Ladislaw, to ourselves one of very great charm, in any degree drawn from George Henry Lewes, as his wife first remembered him? The suggestion that she should try her hand at fiction undoubtedly came from Mr. Lewes. Probably no great

writers ever know their real vein. But for this outward stimulation, she might have remained through life the accurate translator, the brilliant reviewer, the thoughtful poet, to whom accuracy of poetic form was somewhat wanting, rather than as the writer of fiction who has swayed the hearts of men as no other writer but Walter Scott has done, or even attempted to do.

In the maturity of her life and intellectual powers she became known as a writer of fiction. There are those who now regard the *Scenes of Clerical Life* as her best work. Beautiful as they are, that is not our opinion, and, at any rate, the *Scenes* failed to attract much notice at first. The publication of *Adam Bede*, however, took the world by storm.

As in the *Scenes of Clerical Life* the actual surroundings and the mere sketch outlines of many of the characters were drawn from her Warwickshire home, so in *Adam Bede* she has gone for her scenery to Derbyshire, the cradle of her family. That Dinah Morris was to some extent a real character has long been said. A letter to Miss Hennell, recently published, tells us how exceedingly little of actual portraiture there was, and as Shakspeare with the stories which formed the basis of his plays, she has infused and irradiated the simplest and commonest facts with her own light and warmth and eloquence. The likeness, however, was recognized at once. There lies before us a very curious little book, published in 1859 by Tallant and Co., of 21 Paternoster Row, called "*Seth Bede, the Methody: His Life and Labors, chiefly written by Himself,*" from which we find that Hayslope is the little village of Roston, four miles from Ashbourne. Adam and Seth were Samuel and William Evans; but the Dinah of real life cast in her lot, not with Adam, but with Seth. The incident of their father's death is true, and Samuel Evans himself describes the process of his conversion, his instruction by "Mr. Beresford, a class-leader, and a precious man of God," and his after-career as a Methodist. The account of Dinah is extremely interesting, and, from the Methodist point of view, entirely confirms the statement given by her niece, both in the novel and in the letter to Miss Hennell. But the little tract quotes with the utmost coolness Dinah's prayer on the village green as "having been preserved," the real fact being that it is quoted bodily out of the novel;



and of this Miss Evans herself says, "How curious it seems to me that people should think Dinah's sermon, prayers, and speeches were copied, when they were written, with hot tears, as they surged up in my own mind!" Perhaps the greatest compliment, though an equivocal one, that can be paid to a man's own compositions is that others should endeavor to steal them. This was the case with the novel of *Adam Bede*. Finding that the

case in this singular country of ours, by their ecclesiastical differences of High and Low Church. In that Coventry neighborhood it was perhaps only the publication of after-works, which Mr. Liggins did not see fit to copy, that entirely exploded his preposterous claims.

This novel showed the great range of characters over which the author's observations and fancy extended; they showed also her deep and wide sympathy. All



ELIZABETH EVANS ("DINAH MORRIS").

author desired to remain unknown, a poor creature, whose name should be gibbeted as Joseph Liggins, residing at Nuneaton, being in needy circumstances, claimed the novel, stating that, after the manner of Milton and other great authors, he had received for it a wholly inadequate sum, and showing to various persons the manuscript, which he had taken the trouble to make from the printed book, asked and received certain moneys to supplement his publishers' niggardliness. His cause was enthusiastically espoused by one or two neighboring clergy, and in spite of the real author's denial of Mr. Liggins's claims, a hot controversy raged for a time, the parties being sharply divided, as is the

writers but the greatest—a Shakspeare, a Goethe, a Scott, a George Eliot—take interest in their own class, their own co-religionists, alone. The others of whom they speak come in as the supernumeraries on a stage, to fill up the background of the picture, but those who bring them seem not to consider whether they are men and women with human hearts, or merely marionettes. But the great writer shows that even the humblest, "if you prick them, will bleed," and discovers the human touch of goodness in the most unpromising characters—in the poor frivolous little Hetty, in the sensuous, pleasure-loving Arthur Donnithorne, as well as in Dinah and Mr. Irwine. The sole point,





DRAWING-ROOM IN WHICH GEORGE ELIOT'S RECEPTIONS WERE GIVEN, AT THE PRIORY.

perhaps, in which her early country training comes out is the omission, or almost omission, from her canvas of the lowest stratum of country life—the agricultural laborer pure and simple. In English village life, along with perfect freedom of intercourse and direct plainness of speech, caste is even more marked than in the higher ranks of English society. The demarkations are not easily understood, but they are there, when to the outward observer the differences are not very plain between the sections of village ranks, as an undulating country may often seem a dead flat from the mountain height. The miller, the master-carpenter, the small farmer, are each more severed from the mere laborer than are the Mr. Irwines and the Squire Donnithornes, in whose case there is no danger of confusion. It is probable, therefore, that the few laborers whom she specifies are drawn as direct portraits; and George Eliot has made but few advances into the land which Mr. Hardy knows so thoroughly, and which is so peculiarly his own. He, and he alone, sees the English peasant as Shakespeare saw him, with all his accidental lim-

itations, yet with his shrewdness, his pleasantry, and his human heart.

There is no need to discuss in detail novels which are the possession of all English-speaking people, which are as much admired in America as in England, which most of their readers there, as here, believe to be of no ephemeral interest, but part of the abiding literature of both lands. Enough to say that, omitting the very highest and the very lowest sections of modern society, these novels present a photographic picture of English life which will give to the future reader the same sort of truthful information of the early Victorian time that Shakespeare's plays do of Elizabeth's England. We say the early Victorian age: we might even put the date a few years further back, because the quiet lady whose life was one of so much outward peace did not willingly describe the more strenuous aspects of our time. We hear but little of the steam-ship, of the railway, of the hurry of our London life—that London which, as a sponge draws water, seems to gather to itself the life-blood of the country.

That the mind of her who penned these



novels was profoundly religious, no reader can doubt; nor is it in any degree inconsistent with the deepest religious feeling that she should have translated Strauss and Feuerbach. To any such soul, in the struggle which attends an inability to believe what has been previously taught, the effort to clear the thoughts by the definite grasp of those completely opposed is oftentimes of great spiritual help. When, however, we attempt closely to define the religion in which George Eliot rested, our task becomes difficult.

of a modern St. Theresa; the passionate fervor of Dinah, supplying by sympathy all that was lacking in external culture—were understood and revered by her. All that was most human, and therefore most divine, most ennobling, and most helpful, was assimilated by her. The painful bliss of asceticism, the rapture of Catholic devotion, the satisfaction which comes of self-abnegation, were realized by her as though she had been a fervid Catholic. But the ground-tone of her thought was essentially and intensely Protestant.



CHEYNE WALK, CHELSEA—MR. CROSS'S HOUSE IN FOREGROUND.

We find in her the most marvellous power of putting herself in the position of the holders of all creeds, so deep was her sympathy with every form in which the religious instincts have expressed themselves. The simple faith, half pagan but altogether reverent, of Dolly Winthrop; the sensible, matter-of-fact, and honorable morality of Mr. Irwine; the aspirations

She could not submit herself completely to any external teacher. Of Auguste Comte, whose system she more and more admired as the old creeds lost their hold upon her soul, she said more than once in the closing months of her life, "I will not submit to him my heart and my intellect." Her views on immortality are expressed in the great poem—great sure-



ly despite of some defects of form—which closes the volume, *Jubal and Other Poems*, so well known by its first line:

“O, may I join the choir invisible!”

An unsatisfactory immortality, it may appear to many; but it is one which seemed to her to carry out most fully the great creed of self-renunciation, the giving all for others, hoping for nothing again, either in time or in eternity.

We have said already that we do not make any direct criticism on her novels. Let this alone be said, that to us *Middlemarch* seems the crowning work of her life; not, however, that *Daniel Deronda* showed any falling off of power, but that in her eager desire to do justice to a great race, too cruelly misunderstood, she chose a theme in which the world at large was less specially interested. But her intellectual eye was not dim at the last, neither was her intellectual force abated, and it is possible that she might have surpassed herself even as she was in *Middlemarch*. But we shall never have an opportunity of guessing on imperfect data. Most wise-

Perhaps no one filling a large portion of the thoughts of the public in two hemispheres has ever been so little known to the public at large. Always in delicate health, always living a student life, caring little for what is called general society, though taking a genial delight in that of her chosen friends, she very seldom appeared in public. She went to the houses of but a few, finding it less fatiguing to see her friends at home. Those who knew her by sight beyond her own immediate circle did so from seeing her take her quiet drives in Regent's Park and the northern slopes of London, or from her attendance at those concerts at which the best music of the day was to be heard. There, in a front row, in rapt attention, were always to be seen Mr. and Mrs. Lewes, and none who saw that face ever forgot its power and spiritual beauty. To the casual observer there was but little of what is generally understood to be beauty of form.

In more than one striking passage in his novels Mr. Hardy has recognized the fact that the beauty of the future, as the



GEORGE ELIOT'S GRAVE.

ly those whom she has left to mourn her loss deemed it best to destroy the small fragment which yet remained of a novel which she had begun, reverencing her own dislike of unfinished work, and what they believe would have been her own wishes.

race is more developed in intellect, can not be the ideal physical beauty of the past; and in one of the most remarkable he says that “ideal physical beauty is incompatible with mental development and a full recognition of the coil of things. Mental luminousness must be fed with the



oil of life, even though there is already a physical need for it." And this was the case with George Eliot. The face was one of a group of four, not all equally like each other, but all of the same spiritual family, and with a curious interdependence of likeness. These four are Dante, Savonarola, Cardinal Newman, and herself. We only know one such other group, and that consisting of three only. It is that formed of the traditional head of Christ (the well-known profile on a coin), Shakspeare, and St. Ignatius Loyola. In the group of which George Eliot was one there is the same straight wall of brow; the droop of the powerful nose; mobile lips, touched with strong passion kept resolutely under control; a square jaw, which would make the face stern were it not counteracted by the sweet smile of lips and eye. We can hardly hope that posterity will ever know her from likenesses as those who had the honor of her acquaintance knew her in life. Only some world's artist could have handed her down as she lived, as Bellini has handed down the Doge whom we all know so well on the walls of the National Gallery. The two or three portraits that exist, though valuable, give but a very imperfect presentment. The mere shape of the head would be the despair of any painter. It was so grand and massive that it would scarcely be possible to represent it without giving the idea of disproportion to the frame, of which no one ever thought for a moment when they saw her, although it was a surprise, when she stood up, to see that, after all, she was but a little fragile woman who bore this weight of brow and brain.

It is difficult for any one admitted to the great honor of friendship with either Mr. Lewes or George Eliot to speak of their home without seeming intrusive, in the same way that he would have been who, unauthorized, introduced visitors, yet something may be said to gratify a curiosity which surely is not now impertinent or ignoble. When London was full, the little drawing-room in St. John's Wood was now and then crowded to overflowing with those who were glad to give their best of conversation, of information, and sometimes of music, always to listen with eager attention to whatever their hostess might say, when all that she said was worth hearing. Without a trace of pedantry, she led the conversation to some

great and lofty strain. Of herself and her works she never spoke; of the works and thoughts of others she spoke with reverence, and sometimes even too great tolerance. But those afternoons had the highest pleasure when London was empty or the day wet, and only a few friends were present, so that her conversation assumed a more sustained tone than was possible when the rooms were full of shifting groups. It was then that, without any premeditation, her sentences fell as fully formed, as wise, as weighty, as epigrammatic, as any to be found in her books. Always ready, but never rapid, her talk was not only good in itself, but it encouraged the same in others, since she was an excellent listener, and eager to hear. Yet interesting as seemed to her, as well as to those admitted to them, her afternoons in London, she was always glad to escape when summer came, either for one of the tours on the Continent in which she so delighted, or lately to the charming home she had made in Surrey. She never tired of the lovely scenery about Witley, and the great expanse of view obtainable from the tops of the many hills. It was on one of her drives in that neighborhood that a characteristic conversation took place between her and one of the greatest English poets, whom she met as he was taking a walk. Even that short interval enabled them to get into somewhat deep conversation on evolution; and as the poet afterward related it to a companion on the same spot, he said, "Here was where I said 'good-by' to George Eliot; and as she went down the hill, I said, 'Well, good-by, you and your molecules,' and she said to me, 'I am quite content with my molecules.'" A trifling anecdote, perhaps, but to those who will read between the lines, not other than characteristic of both speakers.

In May of last year, Mrs. Lewes, who for some time past after her great bereavement had been again beginning to see her friends and enter a little into society, became the wife of Mr. J. W. Cross. There would be no excuse for attempting to penetrate into the home she recently formed, and in which, from accidental circumstances, a very few friends had seen her. This only may be said, that some of those who had loved her best, and had been a little inclined to doubt whether any second union would now be for their friend's welfare, found that all their scru-



ples had been idle and gratuitous, that as the twenty years of her life past had been years of deep and true happiness, so a like period might have been begun, through which she might have passed to an honored old age, sheltered and protected by the tenderest care and love. But it was not to be. Her health, never robust, had seemed to revive and strengthen in the tour taken to Italy after her marriage, but a return to the English climate chilled and withered her from the first. A winter such as has been scarcely known in England within the memory of man laid upon her, at its beginning, an iron hand, and only one fortnight after her removal to her new home in Chelsea, she sank from the effects of a cold which appeared but little dangerous at first. She was laid to rest by the side of Mr. George Henry Lewes on a day which was indeed calculated to test the love of those who wished to be present at her funeral. Yet the chill rain seemed to have kept away none who desired to be with her to the last, and to comfort by their presence those most dear whom she had left. Besides her husband and her step-son, there came members of her own family from Warwickshire, and it was touching to remember the closing lines of her autobiographical sonnets, in which she says,

"But were another childhood's world my share,  
I would be born a little sister there,"

when we saw the brother-companion of those years standing by his sister's grave. There were those, too, who had only known her as an invisible presence while they read her books, to whom she had been the comfort and the help she most wished, who came to strew flowers on her coffin. Had she been laid in the Abbey, where some would fain have placed her, the funeral might have been more stately, but it could not have been more full of respect and affection and sorrow.

We have already said that we live too near the dead to gauge her place in literature. To many of us her conversation, which was better than her books, her sympathy and large-heartedness, which were even more remarkable than her conversation, and our great personal affection, may have in some degree dimmed the keen edge of criticism. We do not, however, think that this is so, or that the judgment of those of her own time will be very greatly reversed. Of some mannerisms

we are conscious—mannerisms which perhaps prevent her, when she speaks in her own person, from ever being considered among the great masters of language; neither was she among the very greatest of story-tellers. We can not as such place her on as high a pedestal as Sir Walter Scott. When she deals with that which was originally unfamiliar to her, as in *Romola*, the effort of preparation is somewhat too visible, the topographical and antiquarian learning too little spontaneous. In poetry, the thought was over-great for the somewhat unfamiliar element in which it moved, and brought to the reader a certain sense of stiffness or constraint. The canvas on which she worked, as suited to our age, was not the canvas of Æschylus, of Dante, or that on which Shakspeare, who worked in all kinds of art, drew the figures of Lear, of Lady Macbeth, and of Othello. But in the description of the tragedy which underlies so much of human life, however quiet-seeming, in the subtle analysis of character, in the light touch which unravels the web of complex human motives, she seems to us absolutely unrivalled in our English tongue, except by him who is unrivalled in all the branches of his art, the mighty master Shakspeare. No; history will not reverse our judgment, and generations to come may find a pleasure in tracing the resemblances, with all their unlikeness, between her and the great dramatist, and in recognizing how thoroughly English were the minds of both. They were cradled in the same county; they were nursed by the same outward influences, the same forest of Arden—for Shakspeare's Arden is in reality the Warwickshire, not the French one. The same forest of Arden was round them both, the same forms of gently sloping hills and fields; and the scenes of George Eliot's youth reproduced in the novels may be joined, and joined easily, with the pilgrimages from afar to Charlecote and to Stratford. That is for the future; but for those who knew herself, admiration of her genius is secondary in their minds to regret for loss. They think less of the words preserved on the lasting page for many generations to come than of the low sweet voice which so often thrilled them as it uttered words of welcome, and wisdom, and of sympathy; of the bright home, so easily accessible, and so often opened to the young beginning their London career, all the more



hopefully because George Eliot and George Henry Lewes had given them encouragement; of the new home she had made, to leave it soon so desolate, and of the new friend they had gained, with whom to sympathize when he was so untimely and unexpectedly left alone.

#### THE SPEAKER'S RULING.

ENGLAND has given Parliamentary law to the whole English-speaking world. Whatever new or whatever old and hitherto unused practice is resorted to in the British House of Commons, even if it does not directly affect, is of great interest to a large part of mankind. Parliamentary government and procedure, modelled on those of the renowned assembly that has had its principal seat at Westminster for at least six hundred years, and which is the oldest legislative body in the world with a continuous history, now exist not only in Great Britain, but in every one of her dependencies throughout her vast empire, and in this great independent republic, with its central Congress and its thirty-eight State Legislatures. Parliamentary law, *lex et consuetudo parliamenti*, not only regulates the forms of procedure in the legislative departments of these numerous governments, but it also furnishes the rule for the orderly conduct of business in all assemblies of persons convened for the transaction of public or private affairs. There is no branch of the customary law that is of more general application, or that has a wider sweep; and where it is not modified by special rules for the government of particular assemblies, the whole body of its rules and maxims rests upon custom, precedent, and continued practice. Of this custom, precedent, and practice, the law of Parliament, as it has been immemorially held in England, is the origin and fountain-head, for us and for many other millions of the human race. We, the various branches of the great British family, are pre-eminently a people of precedents; quite as much as the Romans or the Greeks of antiquity, who constantly appealed to the customs of their ancestors. Eliminate the force of precedent from our social system, and we should be like a ship on the wide ocean without a rule of navigation in more than half of the occurrences of social and political life, for textual and written rules for the government of public affairs have nev-

er yet comprehended one-half of the occasions on which a rule of some kind is imperatively required. It was therefore with an interest amounting to an astonished sensation that the news was received in this country on the 3d of February last, that on the preceding day the Speaker of the English House of Commons had arrested a debate on a motion of the government for leave to bring in a bill, had declared that discussion should proceed no further, and that the question should be immediately taken. On the morning when intelligence of this extraordinary event was published throughout this country, the greater part of the American public—probably ninety-nine hundredths of our people—supposed that the Speaker had discovered among the powers of his office, hitherto latent, a power by which he could terminate a debate at his own discretion, when, in his official judgment, it was carried on solely for the purpose of factiously obstructing the public business. If such a power really resided in the Speaker by virtue of his office, the fact that it had long lain dormant, by reason of its exercise not being called for, could constitute no valid objection to its use in a case of plain necessity. Whether the power existed would depend upon that unwritten and traditionary law of Parliament that has been made by precedent, or has at any time been recognized as part of the custom of Parliament, in the absence of any standing rule expressly creating and conferring it. It was well understood on this side of the Atlantic—and indeed the whole occurrence made it manifest—that there is no such standing rule of the House of Commons conferring on the Speaker this power. We were somewhat startled, therefore, at the first aspect of the case, because it seemed that the Speaker had acted upon the assumption that by virtue of a power inherent in his office he could stop a discussion which he considered as a mere willful obstruction of the business of the House.

A little further reflection and a closer examination of the facts led to a doubt whether this was the real meaning of the Speaker; and in order to judge of his meaning, and to determine the real essence of his act, it may be useful to recapitulate the important features of the whole occurrence.

On the last day of January, Mr. Gladstone moved for leave to bring in a bill