

bigness, its collectivity, in part—from extension over time. Far from seeking after beauty, he almost goes out to embrace ugliness. He does not spare us even dullness, that we may get a sense of the long, waste spaces of life, their dreary reality. We are keenly interested in the loves of hero and heroine, but all the time something much bigger is going on, generation after generation rolls by in ceaseless panorama; it is the life not of Edwin and Hilda, it is the life of the Five Towns. After a vision so big, to come back to the ordinary individualistic love-story is like looking through the wrong end of a telescope.

Art of high quality and calibre is seldom obscure. The great popular writers of the nineteenth century — Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson, Tolstoy—wrote so that all could understand. A really big artist has something important to say, something vast to show, something that moves him and presses on him; and he will say it simply because he must get it said. He will trick it out with no devices, most of all with no obscurities. It has vexed and torn him enough while it was pushing its way to be born. He has no peace till it is said, and said as clearly as he