

a novelist. There is *Pendennis*, of course; but who believes that Pen was a great novelist, or cares what kind of a novelist he was? Who cares about *Walter Lorraine*? Would anybody give twopence to read it? The reason is that in the poet the manifestations of literary genius are direct and explicit—some are susceptible of quotation, some may be cut out with the scissors—while in the novelist they are oblique and implied. Humphrey Kent in *Cynthia* is in no sense an explicit genius; we are not, in fact, told that he was a genius at all. His technique seems to have been that of Mr. George Moore, then rather fashionable. The book puts it no higher than this, that the hero, with an obvious bent for writing, marries in a hurry and then finds out that he cannot be an honest man and support his wife and child by the same stroke. It is not whether he can be a good novelist and a good lover too, but whether he can be a good novelist and pay his bills. That's not very exciting, though George Gissing in *New Grub Street* drew out of it a squalid and miserable tale which, once begun, had to be finished. Luckily, in *Cynthia*, Mr. Merrick finds a secondary theme, and handles it so delicately and so tenderly that the book has an abiding charm because of it. That theme is the growth of Cynthia's soul.

I myself am one of Cynthia's victims, and I am sure that Mr. Merrick is another. He