

found it too big a matter for his light battery. In the *Companions'* case I do know. It was because he came upon another problem which interested him more, a problem with a sentimental attraction far more potent than any he could have got out of miscegenation. The result was the growth, out of a rather ugly root, of a charming and tender idyll of two poets, an idyll, nevertheless, with a psychological *crua*x involved in its delicate tracery. All this seems a long way from *Cynthia*, which is my immediate business, but is not so in truth. In *Cynthia* (which, I believe, followed *Violet*) you have a problem of psychology laid out before you, and again Mr. Merrick does not, I think, fairly tackle it. But he fails to tackle it, not because it is too big for his guns, as *Violet's* was, and not because he finds another which he likes better, as he did when he was upon the *Companions*, but because, I am going to suggest, he found it too small. He took up his positions, opened his attack, and the enemy in his trenches dissolved in mist.

The problem with which *Cynthia* opens is the familiar one of the novelist, considered as such, and as lover, husband, father and citizen. Now it's an odd thing, but not so odd as it seems at first blush, that while you may conceive a poet in these relations and succeed in interesting your readers, you will fail with a novelist. I cannot now remember a single interesting novel about