

Lincoln, the Doctor, are as
living figures as any I know
in fiction. But, to quote
a correspondent of ^{a paper of another place}
from the "Nation", they are
what human beings might be
anywhere, & not what they
are somewhere. You are an
idealist, & may be a great
one. So when you come to
realism, when you put your
people in our own Britain & go
into local details, & such
like, you fail. Your fiction is
too good to be contemporary.
I don't know whether I expect

just what I mean; but I really mean
something. If you like we will talk about

it some
night at
the S.

Proctor.

Somerset Club,
Boston.

5 Dec.

83

Manchester,

I have to

thank you

for a great

of painful pleasure.

Sincerely yours

Francis Thompson

Dear Rater:

I have just finished
the "Wheel of Fire", & feel
nervous to send you just a
line about it. If you are
like me, even a stupid line,
well-meant, will be welcome.

In the first place, then,
it is full of a power it
does not exhaust. I thought
out I have that feeling that

the work of a real born
artist always brings me, that
there is a man who has con-
tinued to tell me something. In
a rare degree, strong as it
is, the book impresses me with
the fact that, whether you
know it or not, you know
so much more to say that
you will never really ~~be~~,
as I have, to wait for
motives.

All the same, I don't
like the book throughout.
I shall speak of only one point

of detail:— on p. 311, after
having made Sam's eye-
thing that almost started my
tears, you quite spoiled it by
informing me in the next
breath that it was pathetic.
Yet I should not have
remembered this, if the rest
of the detail had not been
good enough to make the im-
pression strong by force of contrast.
But the trouble I find
with the thing is this: Your
characters are, when serious,
starkly human. Sam's, Sam's,