

in Brunetière's criticism of Molière. Were clearness and 'reason' ever exemplified more emphatically than in his writings? Was there ever a more 'natural' philosophy? Yet Brunetière's final judgement upon his work is hostile. He severs the artist from the teacher so far as to praise the one, and condemn the other. To understand this we must read the many pages of subtle sophistry in which Brunetière explains his idea of 'nature' in humanity, and 'nature' in art. The gist of the long argument is that man is a kingdom within a kingdom; our morality, that is to say, is a protest against instinctive impulse, and its elevation is proportioned to our power of treading down the 'nature' within us. This brings us into the region of Christian dogma (and mediæval dogma at that), and we are now in a position to understand Brunetière's repugnance for the 'natural' men of his country's literature. Such a natural man was Molière, as Rabelais and Montaigne had been before him. Such another was the naive LaFontaine, and even in a fuller sense Rousseau and Diderot of the succeeding century. Voltaire, whom Brunetière has the good grace to call the most characteristically French of all writers, goes to the wall, not as the exponent of the natural philosophy, but as the opponent, on other grounds, of Christian tradition.

There remain the naturalists of the nineteenth century. Do they not seek clearness? Do they not follow nature? Are they not clamorously zealous in the cause of truth? Finally, are they not wholly hostile to the subjectivity of their romantic predecessors? Why then may we not accept this group without reserve? Again we must cut and slash that poor word 'nature,' and conclude that, because of the grossness involved in nature, it is not admissible to pour the whole of nature into art. We must preserve at all costs the dignity and the decency of literature. Furthermore, the undue emphasis which these writers set upon detail, their mania for facts, even were other vices lacking, would invalidate their work.

Only for a period of fifty years, from 1640 to 1690, are those literary qualities found in combination, which constitute,