

of it equals the best of the great masters of an earlier day. If this be true of fiction, it is still more strictly true of poetry and the drama. History has, however, gained by a surer scientific method and a wealth of documentary sources inaccessible in former generations. If there has been a temptation to neglect and even undervalue style in historical writing, this defect will disappear when educated readers who look for truth cease to associate it with the absence of polish. There is certainly no justification for the divorce of accuracy, honesty and open-mindedness from strength, freedom and grace of language. Criticism has been, perhaps, most affected by new ideas. Taine may be said to have anticipated the treatment of literature as a product of race and environment which must be studied as a branch of natural history. Mr. Brunetière, who has lectured in Canada, has reduced this method to a system. It is a system which, save in delicate hands, is likely to end in all sorts of exaggerations.

The comparative method of studying literature has been made possible by the same developments which have made a large class in every nation acquainted with other communities and ways of thinking, as exemplified in their literature and their arts. Improved means of land and ocean travel, correspondence and telegraphic communication have brought about a virtual revolution. Young people of to-day can hardly imagine the leisurely methods of locomotion with which their grandfathers had to be contented. At the beginning of the period under review, men below middle age could remember the time when England had not a mile of railway. A man of 30 in 1850 was ten years old when the Liverpool-Manchester line, the opening of which was looked forward to with more foreboding on the part of the many than confidence on the part of the few, was still in the future. And unhappily, when the fated day arrived and Stephenson's train of 29 carriages and eight Rocket locomotives, with its 600 passengers, started from Liver-

pool, for one important traveller it was doomed to be a journey to death. The Right Honourable Mr. Huskinson, having with others alighted at Parkhurst to greet the Duke of Wellington (waiting in his carriage to see the unprecedented sight), the Rocket, passing unduly, threw him down and inflicted fatal injuries. It was the world's pity, for otherwise that first trial refuted all the fables of the prophets of evil. The scornful predictions of the smart young fogeys of the day are pleasant reading now. They laughed at the notion of the railway beating the mail coach. Poor old coaches! Before that trial trip of the Rocket and its mates, there were on the British roads twenty-two regular and seven extra conveyances. When they were all full they carried 688 passengers. In eighteen months the railway had carried 700,000 persons, or on an average 1,070 a day. Steam navigation had already made some headway in 1830, but it was not until 1833 that Canada showed the laggards how to steam (in spite of Dionysius Lardner) all the way across the Atlantic.

Canada was also early in the railway field. In the very year after the opening of the Liverpool-Manchester line, a charter was obtained for a line between Laprairie and St. Johns. In 1836 it was opened for traffic. But it was not until 1851 that it was extended to Rouse's Point and St. Lambert, so that, save for the short line from Montreal to Lachine, it constituted all the railway facilities of Canada (as then known) at the beginning of the half century. In fact, it was not until some years of it had elapsed that Canada had either railway connection with the United States or regular steam communication with the Old Land. This fact is mentioned here out of its due time and place in order that Canadian readers may be able to realize how complete a revolution has been wrought during the period that we desire to survey. What relates to Canada will be dealt with in greater detail after this preliminary survey is over. Electric telegraphy (in which Canada was