

In the last thirty years realism has certainly not died out, and we ought to be grateful, for realism rightly understood means nothing else than the search after human verity; but the success of Bourget, Bazin, Bordeaux, more recently of E. Psichari and E. Clermont, in the novel, also the immense superiority of F. de Curel on the stage, show clearly that the French once more include manifestations of the soul in their notion of the real.

Anatole France had his share in Zola's defeat: the terse criticism of Zola's inspiration which I quoted above soon became a household word; but example is stronger than any criticism, and Anatole France's novels did more than his generally overpraised critical works to rid French literature of cumbersome Naturalism. This statement may seem at first sight to contradict what I said above of the essential similarity between the spirit of both Anatole France and Zola's novels, but it is only an appearance. With the average reader style counts less than matter, and to such a one *Le Lys rouge* may be more dangerous than *La Terre*; but with artists it is not so. Anatole France is a Materialist and a Socialist in his spirit, but in his manner he is a storyteller in the most charming French tradition, with a disdain for what the Romanticists and the Naturalists called force, but which was mostly bombast, and a partiality for clarity, elegance, gracefulness, wit, and generally the literary qualities which the world, not so long ago, regarded as eminently French. It was by these qualities, above all, that Anatole France became contagious; and the consequence was that the hundreds of young writers who in the last twenty years have more or less felt his influence or that of his own masters—Renan first and the French classics afterwards—are generally French,