

To literature, an art which can explain itself, the great public world lent on the whole a reverent and intelligent ear. Its great prose writers were at peace with their audience and were inspired by great public interests. Some of the greatest, for example Tolstoy, produced their finest work on widely human subjects, and numbered their readers and admirers probably by the million. Writers like Dickens, Thackeray, Kingsley, Mill, and Carlyle, even poets like Tennyson and Browning, were full of great public interests and causes, and, in different degrees and at different stages of their lives, were thoroughly and immensely popular. On the other hand, one can find, at the beginning of the period, figures like Blake and Shelley, and all through it a number of painters—the pre-Raphaelites, the Impressionists—walking like aliens in a Philistine world. Even great figures like Burne-Jones and Whistler were for the greater part of their lives unrecognized or mocked at. Millais reached the attention of the world, but was thought by the stricter fraternity to have in some sense or other sold his soul and committed the great sin of considering the bourgeois. The bourgeois should be despised not partially