

of an earlier date, but there was in truth no vernacular literature. I cannot name," he says, "any work in high or low German *prose* which can be carried back to this period. In France, prose writing cannot be said to have begun before the time of Villehardouin (1204) and Joinville (1202); Castilian prose certainly did not begin before the time of Alfonso X (1252); Don Juan Manuel, the author *Conde Lucanor*, was not born till 1282. The *Cronica General de Espana* was not composed till at least the middle of the thirteenth century. About the same time the language of Italy was acquiring that softness and strength which were destined to appear so conspicuously in the prose of Boccaccio and the writers of the next century.

"Of course there was more or less poetry, yet poetry is something that is early developed among the rudest nations, while good *prose* tells that a people have become highly advanced in mental culture."

WILLIAM and MARY HOWITT.—"There is nothing besides the Bible, which sits in a divine tranquillity of unapproachable nobility, like a King of Kings amongst all other books, and the poem of Homer itself, which can compare in all the elements of greatness with the Edda. There is a loftiness of stature and a growth of muscle about it which no poets of the same race have ever since reached. The obscurity which hangs over some parts of it, like the deep shadows crouching mid the ruins of the past, is probably the result of dilapidations; but, amid this, stand forth the boldest masses of intellectual masonry. We are astonished at the wisdom which is shaped into maxims, and at the tempestuous strength of passions